THE DC UNIVERSE BY

LEN WEIN

COLLECTING 23 OF HIS GREATEST STORIES!

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THE DC UNIVERSE BY LEN WEIN

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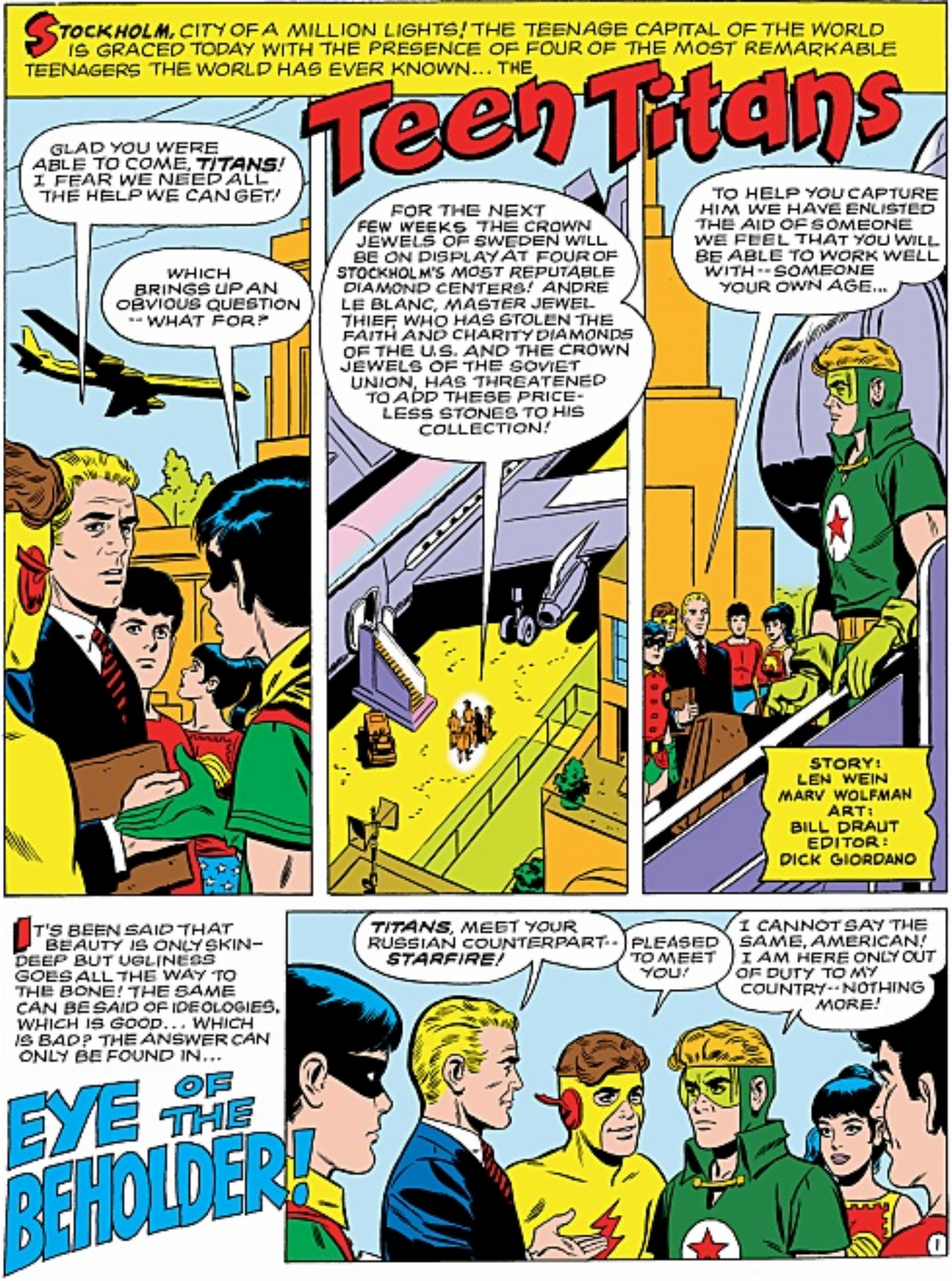
Art by Nick Cardy


STOCKHOLM, CITY OF A MILLION LIGHTS! THE TEENAGE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD IS GRACED TODAY WITH THE PRESENCE OF FOUR OF THE MOST REMARKABLE TEENAGERS THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN... THE
Teen Titans
GLAD YOU WERE ABLE TO COME, TITANS! I FEAR WE NEED ALL THE HELP WE CAN GET!
WHICH BRINGS UP AN OBVIOUS QUESTION -- WHAT FOR?
FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS THE CROWN JEWELS OF SWEDEN WILL BE ON DISPLAY AT FOUR OF STOCKHOLM'S MOST REPUTABLE DIAMOND CENTERS! ANDRE LE BLANC, MASTER JEWEL THIEF, WHO HAS STOLEN THE FAITH AND CHARITY DIAMONDS OF THE U.S. AND THE CROWN JEWELS OF THE SOVIET UNION, HAS THREATENED TO ADD THESE PRICELESS STONES TO HIS COLLECTION!
TO HELP YOU CAPTURE HIM WE HAVE ENLISTED THE AID OF SOMEONE WE FEEL THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO WORK WELL WITH -- SOMEONE YOUR OWN AGE...
STORY: LEN WEIN MARV WOLFMAN ART: BILL DRAUT EDITOR: DICK GIORDANO
IT'S BEEN SAID THAT BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN-DEEP BUT UGLINESS GOES ALL THE WAY TO THE BONE! THE SAME CAN BE SAID OF IDEOLOGIES, WHICH IS GOOD... WHICH IS BAD? THE ANSWER CAN ONLY BE FOUND IN...
EYE OF THE BEHOLDER!
TITANS, MEET YOUR RUSSIAN COUNTERPART -- STARFIRE!
PLEASED TO MEET YOU!
I CANNOT SAY THE SAME, AMERICAN! I AM HERE ONLY OUT OF DUTY TO MY COUNTRY -- NOTHING MORE!
1

THE SLEEK, MODERN AIRPORT IS LEFT FAR BEHIND AS THE AUTOMOBILE CARRYING THE TITANS AND THEIR RUSSIAN ALLY RACES THROUGH THE UNSPOILED BEAUTY OF THE SWEDISH HILLSIDE...
STARFIRE IS IN ON THIS, TITANS, BECAUSE HE'S TANGLED WITH LE BLANC BEFORE -- BUT LE BLANC WAS ABLE TO ESCAPE!
THAT WAS JUST AN ACCIDENT! I AM HERE TO FINISH WHAT I HAD BEGUN!
ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS! WHEN THE TIME COMES, THEN WE'LL SEE!

THE HOTEL TANGTAAFL WHERE THE TITANS UNPACK...
I STILL DON'T KNOW WHY WE NEED ANYONE TO HELP US! WE DO WELL ENOUGH ON OUR OWN!
SO, AT LAST THE AMERICAN AIR OF SUPERIORITY SHOWS THROUGH!

BUT YOU ARE NOT SUPERIOR TO ME! LIKE YOURSELVES, I, TOO, HAVE POWERS -- POWERS GAINED LONG AGO...

"THREE YEARS AGO, MY FATHER, AN ARCHEOLOGIST, AND I WERE INVESTIGATING THE YENESEI RIVER METEOR MYSTERY. PERHAPS YOU HAVE READ ABOUT IT? ON JUNE 30, 1908, A METEOR CRASHED INTO THE YENESEI RIVER IN SIBERIA..."

"IT RESULTED IN AN EXPLOSION GREATER THAN ANY YOUR SCIENTISTS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PRODUCE! YEARS LATER, AN EXPEDITION HEADED BY DR. KAZENTSEV, DISCOVERED RADIATION IN THE AREA THAT COULD NOT HAVE COME FROM A METEOR! ALSO, METALLIC FRAGMENTS WERE FOUND, MAN-MADE FRAGMENTS! MY FATHER FELT THEY WERE FROM A ROCKET CRAFT OF SOME KIND AND WE SET OUT TO FIND IT! IF THIS CRAFT WERE MAN-MADE -- THE COSMONAUT, IF THERE WERE ONE, MIGHT HAVE EJECTED HIMSELF IN A CAPSULE BEFORE THE ROCKET CRASHED! MONTHS LATER, WE FOUND IT!"
2

"IT WAS NIGHT AND I WAS CURIOUS, SO I DESCENDED TO THE SIDE OF THE CRAFT AND LOOKED INSIDE..."
"MACHINERY LINED THE WALLS AND ON WHAT APPEARED TO BE THE CONTROL BOARD WAS A STRANGE LIGHT! I REACHED FOR IT..."
"A BOLT OF POWER SURGED THROUGHOUT MY BODY AND I WAS FLUNG BACKWARDS..."
"SEVERAL MINUTES LATER I REVIVED! I FELT ALIVE -- FULL OF A KIND OF POWER MAN HAS NEVER KNOWN BEFORE..."
NOW I WAS MORE THAN A MAN -- MY SPEED, MY STAMINA, MY STRENGTH WERE INCREASED BEYOND YOUR WILDEST DREAMS!

IT IS NOW LATER THAT NIGHT... AND IN A DARKENED BUILDING IN STOCKHOLM'S JEWEL MART, A GRIM CHARADE IS ABOUT TO BEGIN ...
4

UNSEEN, THE SEMI-CONSCIOUS GUARD MANAGES TO TRIP THE ALARM WHICH SUMMONS...
ZEE TEEN TITANS ... AND MY OLD FOE... STARFIRE!
LE BLANC! I WILL GET HIM!
NO YOU WON'T-- FIRST COME...
...FIRST SER--
UGGGHH!
COME NOW, YOU DEED NOT REALLY THEENK I WOULD BE THAT EASY TO TAKE, DEED YOU?
YOU SHOULD HAVE WAITED YOUR TURN, AMERICAN! NOW HE'S MINE!
YOU COULD NOT DEFEAT ME ALONE, AND EVEN WITH YOUR COMPATRIOTS BESIDE YOU...
...YOU STILL CANNOT!
HE WHO FIGHTS AND RUNS AWAY, LIVES TO STEAL ANOTHER DAY!
5

HE GOT AWAY!
THIS MUST'VE BEEN A PRACTICE ROBBERY... A WARM-UP FOR THE CROWN JEWELS!
DON'T WORRY, KID FLASH! YOU DID YOUR BEST! WE'LL GET ANOTHER SHOT AT HIM!
KID FLASH! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
THEY DID NOT HELP... AND LE BLANC ESCAPED ME AGAIN!
AS THE DISGRUNTLED TEEN-AGERS LEAVE THE JEWEL MART...
YOU HOT-HEADED AMERICAN! YOU SPOILED MY CHANCE TO CAPTURE LE BLANC!
SPOILED YOUR CHANCE! WHILE YOU WERE BUSY YAKKIN' AT LE BLANC, I WAS GETTING MY BRAINS KICKED IN TRYING TO STOP HIM!
BESIDES, I DON'T RECALL YOU PUTTING ON SUCH A GREAT SHOW WHEN YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE AT HIM!
WHY, YOU ARROGANT AMERICAN!
WHEN THINGS DON'T GO YOUR WAY, YOU PLACE THE BLAME ON SOMEONE ELSE! WHAT THEY SAY IN MY HOMELAND IS TRUE ... YOU AMERICANS ARE JUST A BUNCH OF SPINELESS, WHIMPERING TOY SOLDIERS!
WHY, YOU DIRTY...
COOL IT, YOU TWO-- BEFORE I FLATTEN BOTH OF YOU!
6

MEANWHILE...
I'VE GOT IT! ZEE FINAL PLANS ARE COMPLETE!
NOW, NOT EVEN STARFIRE AND HIS NEW-FOUND ALLIES CAN HOPE TO STOP ME!
SOON, THE CROWN JEWELS WILL BE MINE!
END OF PART 1
7
PART TWO CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE FOLLOWING... AN' THAT'S WHERE THE ACTION IS!
JOIN US, WON'T YOU?

TEEN TITANS

PART TWO
"EYE OF THE BEHOLDER!"
THE EVENING HOURS FLY SWIFTLY BY AND THE TITANS GET A MUCH NEEDED REST! THEY ARE AWAKENED BY A SUMMONS FROM INTERPOL AND SO...
WE RECEIVED THIS MESSAGE THIS MORNING, TITANS! I THINK YOU'D BETTER READ IT!
GET THIS, GANG! IT SAYS, "I, THE GREATEST JEWEL THIEF IN THE WORLD, CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO THE GRAND OPENING OF A NEW ROBBERY...
"...TO TAKE PLACE FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY AT THE DIAMOND CENTER OF MY CHOICE! ADMISSION IS FREE-- DOOR PRIZES WILL BE STOLEN...
"... AND FOR YOUR VIEWING PLEASURE, THE RETURN OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST JEWEL THIEF, ANDRE LE BLANC VS. THE DIAPERED DO-GOODERS -- STARFIRE AND THE TEEN TITANS! R.S.V.P. ANDRE LE BLANC"
WELL, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT, AMERICANS?
8

AS IF IN ANSWER TO STARFIRE'S QUESTION, ROBIN TURNS AWAY AND...
LET'S GO, TITANS!
STOP! ANSWER ME, YOU MISERABLE COWARDS!
DID YOU HEAR SOMETHING, GANG?
COME BACK!
I DON'T HEAR ANYTHING!
THE TIME--5 P.M....THE PLACE--THE SHELDORF DIAMOND CENTER! THE MULTITUDE OF SHOPPERS BLEND TOGETHER INTO A FACELESS MASS--STEALING ONE'S IDENTITY--MAKING ONE A PART OF THE CROWD...
GOOD! NO ONE EES IN HERE! NOW EES MY CHANCE!
GENTLEMEN
I WILL SECRET MYSELF IN HERE UNTIL THE CENTER CLOSES.
ONCE INSIDE, LE BLANC UNSCREWS THE GRILLE FROM A VENTILATOR...
YES, THEES'LL BE QUITE LARGE ENOUGH!
ANDRE HOISTS HIMSELF INTO THE LARGE TUNNEL AND CLOSES THE GRILLE BEHIND HIM...
VOILÀ! PHASE ONE COMPLETED! NOW I WAIT PATIENTLY UNTIL...
EVENING DESCENDS ON VELVET ROPES OVER THE DESERTED STREETS! IN THE DIAMOND CENTER ALL IS SILENT, SAVE FOR THE EVEN BREATHING OF THE SLEEPING WATCHMAN AND...
9

...THE HUSHED TONES OF AQUALAD'S VOICE...
AQUALAD TO ROBIN! ALL QUIET SO FAR! I'M GONNA TAKE ANOTHER LOOK-SEE JUST TO MAKE SURE! HOPE THINGS ARE GOING WELL AT YOUR POSTS! OVER AND OUT!
ONE TITAN IS POSTED AT EACH OF THE FOUR JEWEL CENTERS. IF LE BLANC SHOWS, WE'LL GET HIM!
THERE ARE NO SOUNDS SAVE THE REVERBERATING ECHOS OF AQUALAD'S OWN STEPS AS HE WALKS THE LONG, EMPTY CORRIDORS...
BUT ELSEWHERE IN THE LARGE BUILDING, A FIGURE SILENTLY FOLLOWS THE WINDING PATHS FORMED BY THE VENTILATOR SYSTEMS, MANEUVERING HIMSELF CLOSER TO THE PRIZES HE DESIRES...
SLOWLY, INEXORABLY, HE MAKES HIS WAY THROUGH THE BUILDING UNTIL FINALLY...
PHASE TWO COMPLETED! MY PRIZE WAITS BELOW!
BUT FIRST I MUST ASSEMBLE MY LEETLE TOY... AND THEN...
10

THEES MUST BE JUST RIGHT! A LEETLE TO THE LEFT! A LEETLE HIGHER... AND...
THOCK!
AH, PERFECT!
BUT THEN AGAIN, I AM LE BLANC!
MAKING SURE THE STRONG WIRE IS SECURE, LE BLANC SLIDES ACROSS THE 50 FOOT SPAN...
LE BLANC PRESSES A SPRING AND THE WIRE SWIFTLY REWINDS, LEAVING NO TRACE...
BEFORE I CONTINUE, THERE EES ZEE SMALL MATTER OF ZEE FLOOR ALARM TO TAKE CARE OF...
...AND WITH THE HELP OF THEES LEETLE CIRCUIT BREAKER EET EES A VERY SMALL MATTER, EENDEED!
NOW ZEE JEWELS ARE AS GOODAS MINE, AND WITH THE TRAPS I HAVE PREPARED, SHOULD STARFIRE AND THE TEEN TITANS APPEAR, EET WEEL ONLY LEAD TO THEIR DOOM!
11

AHH, ZERE ZEY ARE! A MOMENT TO BREAK OPEN ZEE CASE AND THEN...
BUT, IN THE DARK SHADOWS, AQUA-LAD WATCHES AND...
A-LAD TO ROBIN! I'VE JUST SPOTTED LE BLANC! THE THREE OF YOU BEAT FEET THIS WAY FAST! I'M GONNA TRY TO TAKE HIM MYSELF! OVER AND OUT!
AQUA-LAD-- DON'T--
WHAT TH...?
BLAST! HE HEARD ROBIN!
HOLD IT, LE BLANC!
YOU 'AVE TO BEE KEEDING, MON AMI!
WHY DON'T YOU GO BACK TO YOUR PLAYTHEENGS? THEES EES NO PLACE FOR CHILDREN!
UNGGH!
YOU ARE STUBBORN, LEETLE ONE-- BUT YOU WILL NOT STOP ME!
HE FOLLOWS ME! GOOD! HE WILL SOON DISCOVER THAT ONE DOES NOT PLAY WEETH ANDRE LE BLANC!
YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY THIS TIME, LE BLANC!
WHO EES TRYING TO GET AWAY? EET WEEL DO YOU NO GOOD, BUT FOLLOW ME EEF YOU WISH!
12

IN HIS HASTE TO CHASE LE BLANC, AQUALAD DOES NOT NOTICE THE STILL, GRIM FIGURE, WATCHING SILENTLY FROM THE SHADOWS...
MOVING SWIFTLY THROUGH THE TUNNEL, LE BLANC GAINS DISTANCE OVER AQUALAD...
NOW, BEFORE HE CAN MOVE ANY CLOSER, I WEEL SEAL UP THEES TUNNEL...
...AND, DOUBLE BACK BEFORE AQUALAD CAN TURN AROUND AND GET BACK...
...MADE EET! AQUALAD EES TRAPPED EENSIDE WEETH NO WATER TO KEEP HIM ALIVE!
NOW TO ATTEND TO ZEE MATTER OF ZEE CROWN JEWELS!
INSIDE THE DARK AIR SHAFT, AQUALAD POUNDS ON THE IRON GRATING, BUT HIS EFFORTS ARE WASTED...
IT'S NO USE! THIS THING'S SHUT UP SOLID! THERE'S NO WAY OUT!
MY STRENGTH'S GOING FAST! I'VE GOT TO GET SOME WATER... QUICK!
13
*AQUALAD CAN'T STAY OUT OF WATER FOR MORE THAN AN HOUR AT A TIME--EDITOR.

MEANWHILE...
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GOT PAST AQUALAD, BUT YOU WON'T GET PAST ME!
KEED FLASH!
BUT BEFORE THE TEEN-AGE TORNADO CAN DO ANYTHING...
DON'T BE TOO SURE, MON AMI! ANDRE LE BLANC CAN DO ALMOST ANYTHING!
THAT WON'T STOP SOMEONE WHO CAN RUN UP THE SIDE OF A WALL, MISTER!
EET MAKES NO DEEFERENCE-- ONCE I GET EENSIDE THEES ROOM, YOU WEEL BE FEENISHED!
THEN IT'S UP TO ME TO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T GET INSIDE, RIGHT?

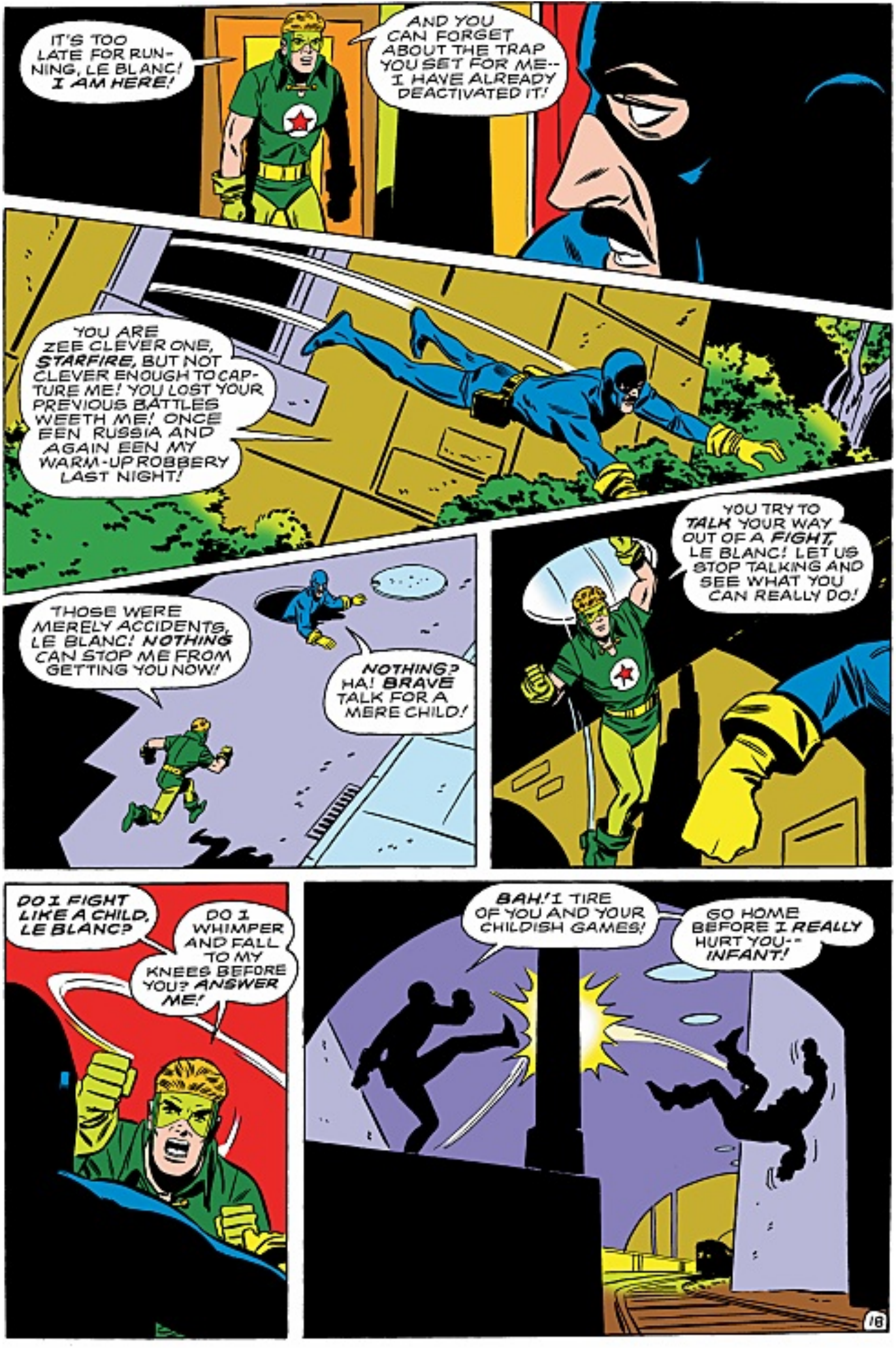
BUT AS THE TEENAGE WHIRLWIND GETS CLOSE TO LE BLANC, A RAY STABS OUT AND KID FLASH "FREEZES" IN PLACE...
ZEE ELECTRIC EYE BEAM I ADJUSTED EES WIRED TO SEVERAL STICKS OF DYNAMITE! EEF YOU EVEN BUDGE... POOF!
FAREWELL, KEED FLASH-- A WORD OF CAUTION-- DO NOT SNEEZE! HA! HA!

EVERYTHEENG EES WORKING PERFECTLY! TWO OF ZEE TEEN TITANS ARE DOWN, AND EVEN EEF OTHERS SHOW UP-- THEY WEEL PROVE TO BE NO MORE OF A PROBLEM THAN THEIR PARTNERS WERE!
AS ANDRE LE BLANC MAKES HIS WAY TO THE CROWN JEWELS, STANDING IN THE PURPLE SHADOWS BEHIND HIM IS STARFIRE!
THE BLAZING CONCLUSION TO "EYE OF THE BEHOLDER" BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE FOLLOWING! HURRY!
15

TEEN TITANS

PART 3 "EYE OF THE BEHOLDER!"
ANDRE LE BLANC MOVES INTO THE QUIET HALLS WHERE...
EXCUSE ME, SIR! DO YOU HAVE THE TIME?
EH?
POW!
OOPS! HOW CARELESS OF ME! "WATCH" OUT!
LOOKS LIKE INSTEAD OF GIVING TIME-- YOU'LL BE DOING TIME!
A SIMPLE CHILDISH PUNCH CANNOT FLOOR ANDRE LE BLANC!
BUT A KEECK FROM ME WEEL CERTAINLY "FLOOR" YOU!
I MUCH PREFER A WELL-PLACED SAVATE KICK TO FISTCUFFS! MOST EFFECTIVE, NO?
NOW, MAY I SUGGEST ZAT YOU DO NOT MOVE!... ZE SLIGHTEST PULL ON ZEE ROPES WEEL CAUSE ZEE CHANDELIER TO FALL ON YOU...
AND VOILA! ROBIN RED MESS!
16

MOVING QUICKLY TO THE CASE WHICH HOLDS THE CROWN JEWELS, LE BLANC SKILLFULLY OPENS IT AND TAKES OUT THE PRICELESS JEWEL TREASURE...
EET EES NOW MINE, AND NOBODY CAN TAKE EET AWAY FROM ME!
YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO LAY ODDS ON THAT, WOULD YOU, LE BLANC?
AH, MA CHERE-- WHAT A WASTE! A BEAUTIFUL CHILD SUCH AS YOURSELF FIGHTING ME! WHAT EES A...
SO HELP ME -- IF YOU SAY "WHAT'S A NICE GIRL LIKE YOU DOING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS," I'LL REALLY CLOBBER YOU!
EVERYWHERE ZEE WOMEN RUSH TO ME! AH... I AM SO HANDSOME EET MAKES ME SEECK!
ME, TOO!
HEY!
MY LASSO!
WITH A DEFT MOTION, LE BLANC YANKS WONDER GIRL TOWARD HIM, ENTANGLING HER IN HER OWN LASSO...
EET MAKES ME FEEL SO BAD, MY LOVELY CHILD, BUT EEF SOMEBODY OPENS ZEE LIGHT, ZEE CURRENT WEEL GO THROUGH YOUR LASSO AND... YOU WEEL DIE!
AND NOW, I WEEL TAKE LEAVE WEETH MY CROWN BEFORE STARFIRE APPEARS!
17


IT'S TOO LATE FOR RUNNING, LE BLANC! I AM HERE!
AND YOU CAN FORGET ABOUT THE TRAP YOU SET FOR ME-- I HAVE ALREADY DEACTIVATED IT!
YOU ARE ZEE CLEVER ONE, STARFIRE, BUT NOT CLEVER ENOUGH TO CAPTURE ME! YOU LOST YOUR PREVIOUS BATTLES WEETH ME! ONCE EEN RUSSIA AND AGAIN EEN MY WARM-UP ROBBERY LAST NIGHT!
YOU TRY TO TALK YOUR WAY OUT OF A FIGHT, LE BLANC! LET US STOP TALKING AND SEE WHAT YOU CAN REALLY DO!
THOSE WERE MERELY ACCIDENTS, LE BLANC! NOTHING CAN STOP ME FROM GETTING YOU NOW!
NOTHING? HA! BRAVE TALK FOR A MERE CHILD!
DO I FIGHT LIKE A CHILD, LE BLANC?
DO I WHIMPER AND FALL TO MY KNEES BEFORE YOU? ANSWER ME!
BAH! I TIRE OF YOU AND YOUR CHILDISH GAMES!
GO HOME BEFORE I REALLY HURT YOU-- INFANT!
18

AN INFANT! ZAT EES ALL YOU ARE! YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS, ZEE TEEN TITANS!
AND EEN MOMENTS, YOU WEEL ALL BE DEAD!
BUT...
ZEE TEEN TITANS??
YOU BET YOUR SWEET BIPPY WE ARE!
STARFIRE LET US OUT FROM YOUR TRAPS! WE STAYED BEHIND BECAUSE HE WANTED FIRST RAPS ON YOU!
OKAY, GANG! LET'S MOVE!
NOW IT'S OUR TURN!
YOU WEEL NEVER GET ME!
19

THE TEEN TITANS, ACTING LIKE A WELL-OILED MACHINE, QUICKLY JUMP INTO ACTION, EACH KNOWING EXACTLY WHAT TO DO...
WONDER GIRL UNLEASHES HER MAGIC LASSO WITH LIGHTNING SPEED...
THE LASSO LOOPS AROUND THE DEADLY GRENADE AND...
BLAM!
QUICKLY, THE TEEN TORNADO THROWS STARFIRE ONTO THE PLATFORM ABOVE...
MOVING QUICKLY TO SAVE HIMSELF KID FLASH JUMPS UP BUT HIS FOOT CATCHES A SMALL LEDGE AND THE TEENAGE CYCLONE FALLS BACKWARDS INTO THE PATH OF THE ONCOMING TRAIN...
...BUT STARFIRE RETURNS THE FAVOR!
20

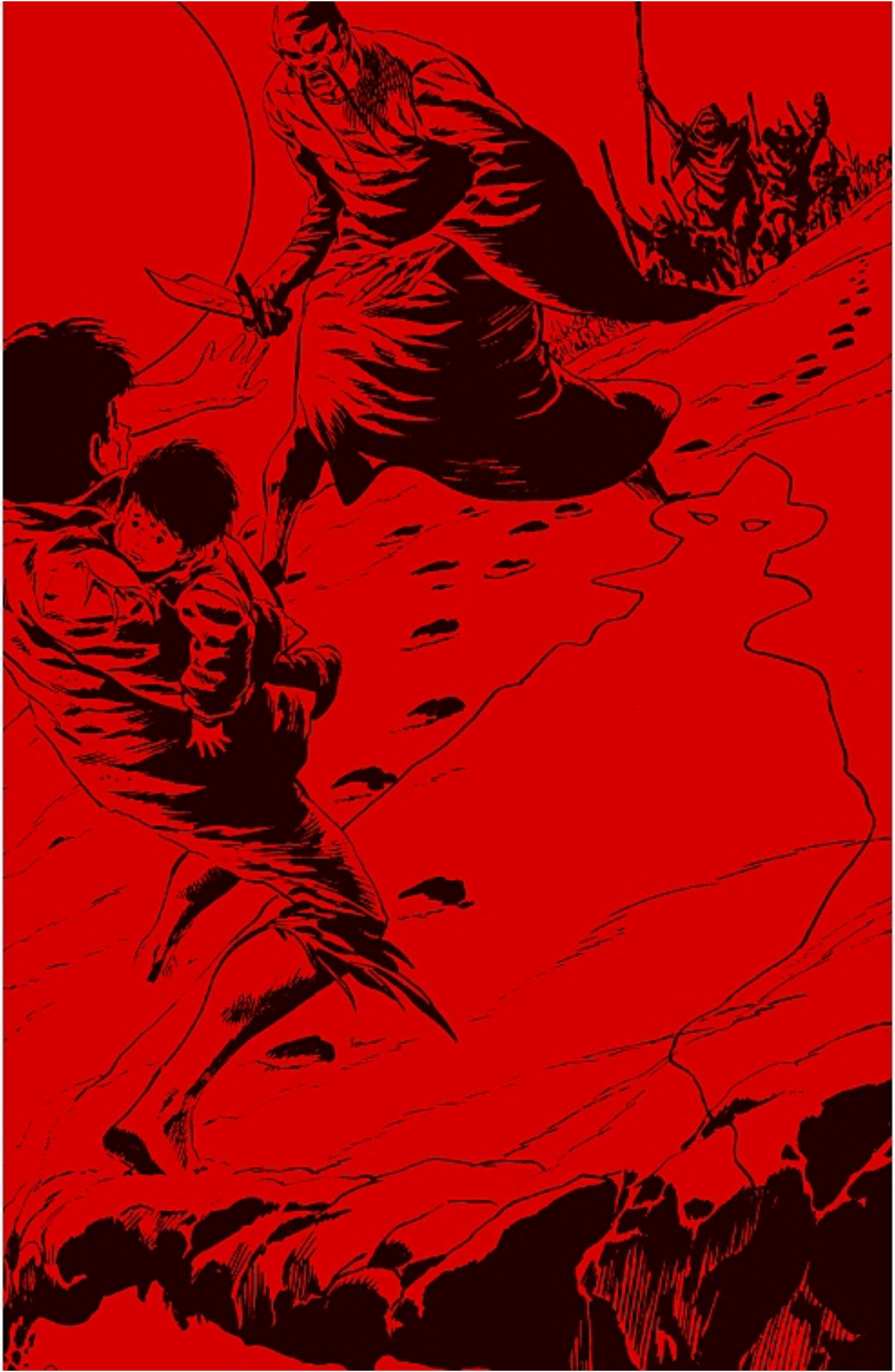
IN AN EFFORT TO GET THE TWO TITANS AWAY FROM HIM, LE BLANC THROWS THE PRICELESS CROWN DOWN A SEWAGE DRAIN...
AQUALAD QUICKLY DIVES DOWN INTO THE DARKNESS BELOW...
GOTTA GET THAT "HAT" AND GET OUT OF HERE!
I LOVE WATER...BUT THE SEWER VARIETY OFFENDS MY SENSITIVITIES!
I GOT IT!
I WONDER HOW ROBIN'S DOING WITH LE BLANC?
NOT TOO WELL AT THE MOMENT..
HOO BOY...
... A GARBAGE PAIL...
...COMIN' AT ME!
21
UP, UP AND AWAY!
WHERE HAVE I HEARD THAT BEFORE?
I HAVE ENJOYED PLAYING ZIS GAME WEETH YOU!
IT'S NO GAME!

YOU FOOL! YOU INCREDIBLE FOOL! IT'S NEVER BEEN A GAME! YOU'RE A GROWN MAN TREATING US LIKE CHILDREN AND YET YOU'RE THE BIGGEST CHILD OF ALL! YOU'VE SPENT YOUR LIFE BUILDING CASTLES OF SAND!
YOU ARE ZEE FOOL! I AM ZEE BIGGEST...
BIG-P YOU'RE A SMALL COG IN A VERY BIG WHEEL! TOMORROW YOU'LL BE NOTHING AND ANOTHER OF YOUR KIND WILL CALL HIMSELF THE GREATEST! AND HE'LL FALL AND THEN ANOTHER AFTER HIM!
YOUR BALLOON HAS BURST AND ALL THE HOT AIR THAT KEPT YOU AFLOAT IS GONE LIKE DUST IN THE WIND!
YOU'RE A WASTE, LE BLANC-- A MISERABLE WASTE!
AND LIKE ALL YOUR KIND, LE BLANC, WHEN IT COMES TO PUTTING UP, YOU'RE A NOTHING!
22

LATER AT THE AIRPORT...
WELL, COMRADES, IT SEEMS THIS IS GOODBYE!
WHAT DO YOU SAY TO SOMEONE WHEN YOU'VE BEEN AS BONE-HEADED AS I HAVE?
NO MATTER WHAT ELSE YOU AMERICANS MAY BE... YOU HAVE TAUGHT ME SOMETHING... THAT ALL MEN, REGARDLESS OF THEIR BELIEF, MUST LEARN TO LIVE TOGETHER! FOR WHEN YOUR IDEOLOGIES AND MINE HAVE LONG SINCE TURNED TO DUST, MAN MUST STILL SURVIVE!
25
THE END

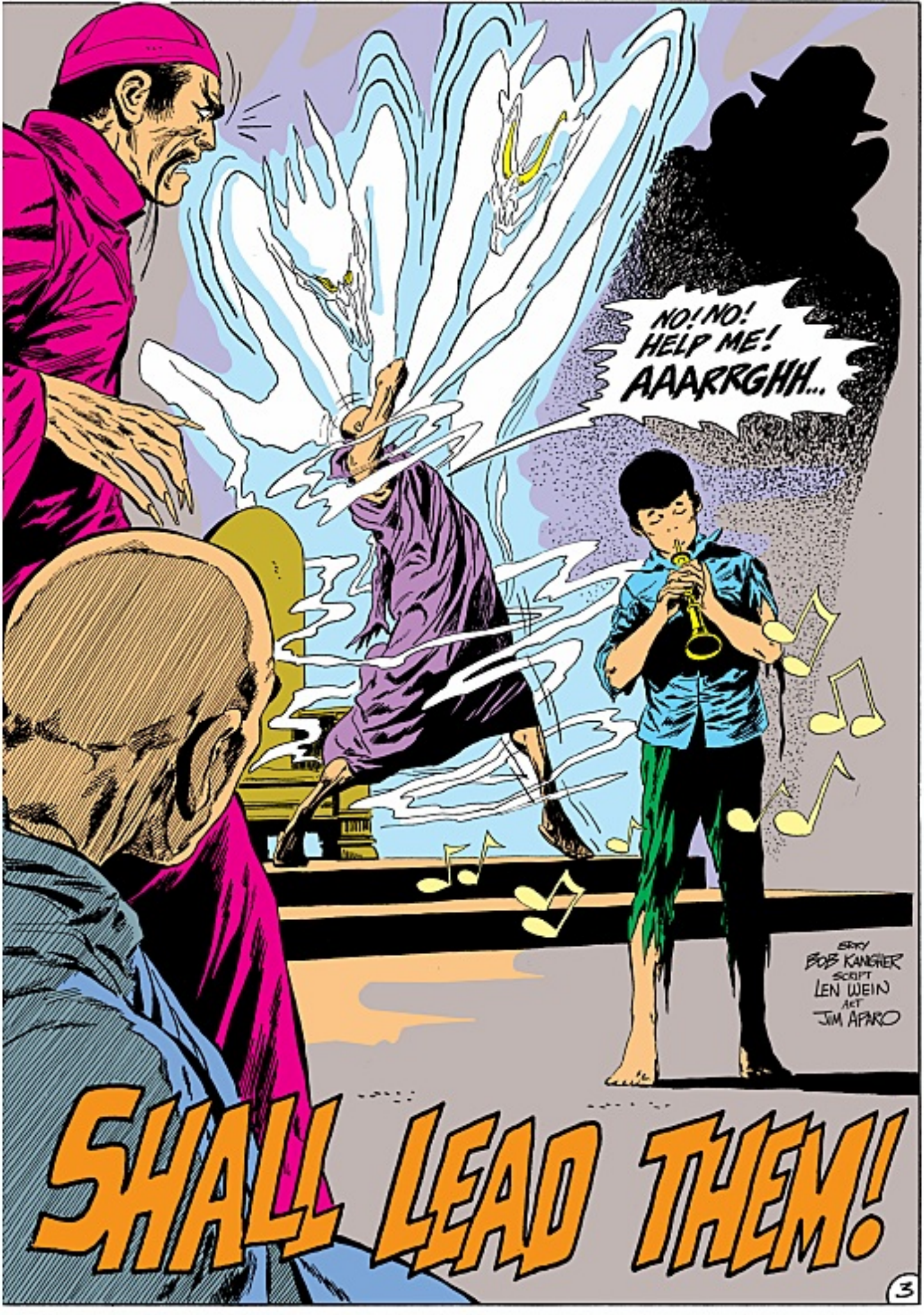
TEEN TITANS

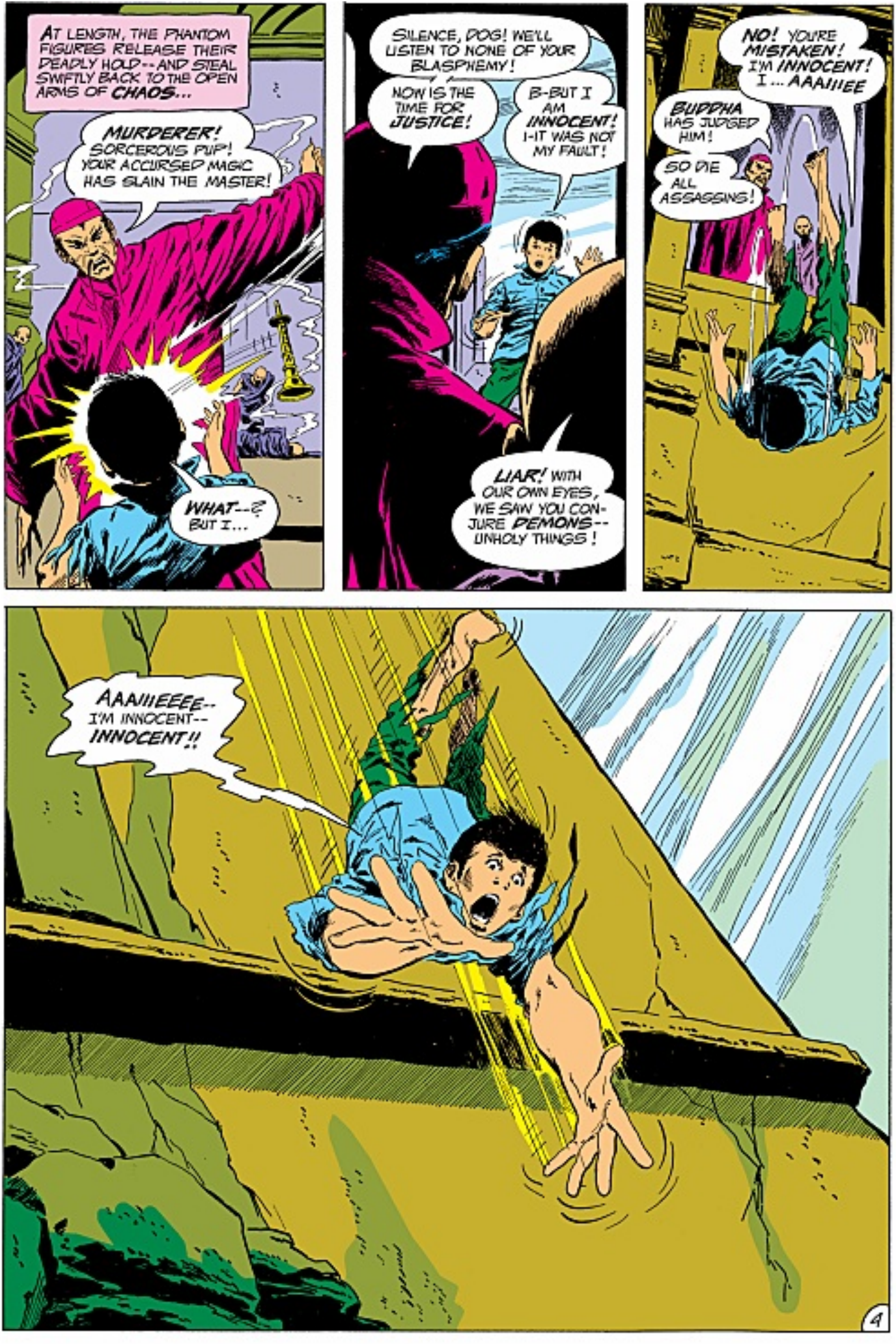
Cover for **THE PHANTOM STRANGER #20** (1972)
Art by Jim Aparo

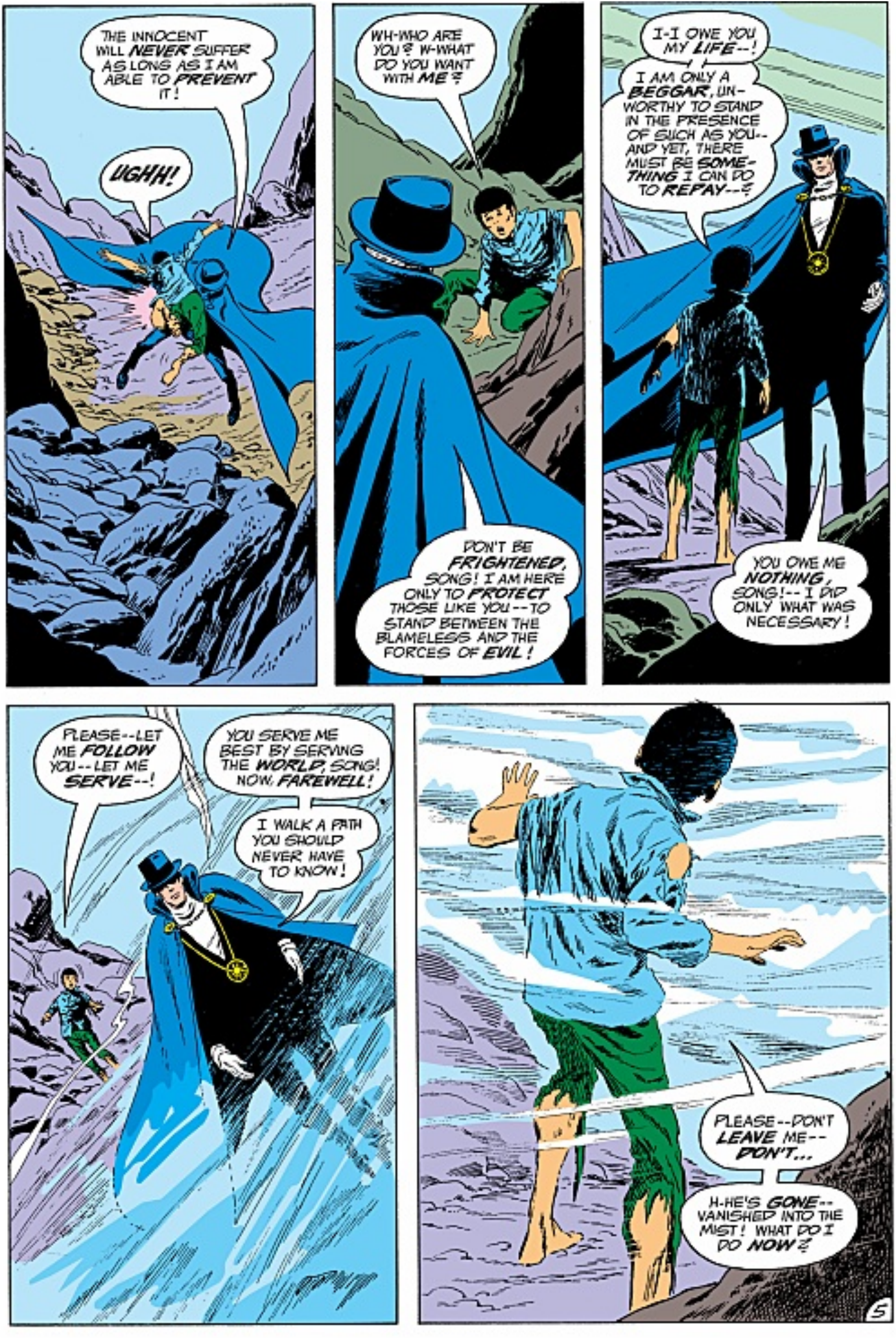


IN EACH MAN'S LIFE, THERE IS A MOMENT OF DESTINY--A SINGLE INSTANT WHICH, IF USED TO ADVANTAGE, CAN ALTER ONE'S FUTURE OR CHANGE THE COURSE OF THE WORLD! THERE ARE SOME WHO CALL IT KISMET, OTHERS WHO LABEL IT FATE AND OTHERS WHO DEEM IT THE WILL OF THE GODS!
THERE ARE SOME WHO CREDIT ME WITH SUCH ABILITIES, WITH THE TALENT TO TAMPER WITH LIVES-- BUT THEY ARE WRONG!
I AM MERELY THE PHANTOM STRANGER-- AND THAT, IN ITSELF, IS ENOUGH!
THE WIND WHISTLES SOFTLY THROUGH THE STILL, SECLUDED VALLEY--CARRYING TALES FROM THE CITY--AND WHISPERS OFF TO THE SEA...
IT IS TIME, MY CHILDREN--TIME AGAIN AT LAST!
MY TIME IN THIS INCARNATION IS ALMOST AT AN END!
YOU MUST GO FORTH OVER THE LAND-- SEEK OUT A CHILD WHO WILL RECEIVE THE BREATH OF MY LIFE AS IT PASSES FROM THESE LIPS FOR THE FINAL TIME!
BUT, MASTER-- YOUR HEART IS STILL STRONG--!
PERHAPS, KAMSET-- BUT MY SPIRIT HAS GROWN WEAK! IT IS TIME...
OH, HIGH LAMA-- HOW FAR I HAVE JOURNEYED TO SEE YOU!
WHO--?

I AM CALLED SONG, GREAT LAMA! I HAVE TRAVELED MANY MILES TO PLAY MY MUSIC FOR YOU--IN HOPES THAT YOU WILL BE PLEASED AND PRAY FOR THE LIFE OF MY SICK MOTHER!
BEGONE, BEGGAR--THE MASTER HAS NO TIME FOR YOU!
NO, KAMSET--LET HIM PLAY! IT HAS BEEN LONG SINCE THESE OLD HALLS WERE TOUCHED WITH BEAUTY!
OH, THANK YOU, GREAT ONE--I SHALL DRAIN MY SOUL DRY FOR YOU!
THE TATTERED YOUTH PUTS FLUTE TO LIPS AND MUSIC FILLS THE AIR--SWEET MELODIES THAT PUT SUNLIGHT IN THE AIR AND JOY IN THE HEART...
TENDER REFRAINS THAT WEAVE SILKEN FANTASIES--AND PULL NIGHTMARES FROM THE DEPTHS OF HELL...
THE GREAT SMOKY FORMS SWIRL TIGHTER AND TIGHTER AROUND THE WIZENED LAMA'S THROAT--AND DARKNESS CLOSES IN, PULLING HIM TO HER BREAST...
A CHILD
2


NO! NO! HELP ME! AAARRGHH...
STORY BOB KANIGHER SCRIPT LEN WEIN ART JIM APARO
SHALL LEAD THEM!
3


AT LENGTH, THE PHANTOM FIGURES RELEASE THEIR DEADLY HOLD--AND STEAL SWIFTLY BACK TO THE OPEN ARMS OF CHAOS...
MURDERER! SORCEROUS PUP! YOUR ACCURSED MAGIC HAS SLAIN THE MASTER!
WHAT--? BUT I...
SILENCE, DOG! WE'LL LISTEN TO NONE OF YOUR BLASPHEMY!
NOW IS THE TIME FOR JUSTICE!
B-BUT I AM INNOCENT! I-IT WAS NOT MY FAULT!
LIAR! WITH OUR OWN EYES, WE SAW YOU CONJURE DEMONS--UNHOLY THINGS!
NO! YOU'RE MISTAKEN! I'M INNOCENT! I... AAAIIIEE
BUDDHA HAS JUDGED HIM!
SO DIE ALL ASSASSINS!
AAAIIIEEEE-- I'M INNOCENT-- INNOCENT!!
4


THE INNOCENT WILL NEVER SUFFER AS LONG AS I AM ABLE TO PREVENT IT!
UGHH!
WH-WHO ARE YOU? W-WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME?
DON'T BE FRIGHTENED, SONG! I AM HERE ONLY TO PROTECT THOSE LIKE YOU--TO STAND BETWEEN THE BLAMELESS AND THE FORCES OF EVIL!
I-I OWE YOU MY LIFE--!
I AM ONLY A BEGGAR, UNWORTHY TO STAND IN THE PRESENCE OF SUCH AS YOU--AND YET, THERE MUST BE SOMETHING I CAN DO TO REPAY--?
YOU OWE ME NOTHING, SONG!--I DID ONLY WHAT WAS NECESSARY!
PLEASE--LET ME FOLLOW YOU--LET ME SERVE--!
YOU SERVE ME BEST BY SERVING THE WORLD, SONG! NOW, FAREWELL!
I WALK A PATH YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE TO KNOW!
PLEASE--DON'T LEAVE ME--DON'T...
H-HE'S GONE--VANISHED INTO THE MIST! WHAT DO I DO NOW?
5

AND IN THE LONELY TEMPLE HIGH ABOVE, SIX MOURNFUL FIGURES PONDER THE SELFSAME QUESTION...
THE MASTER IS DEAD! HIS WISDOM AND GENTLENESS HAVE FLED WITH HIM IN THE HAND OF BUDDHA!
WE ARE A CREATURE WITHOUT A HEAD! HOW WILL WE FIND OUR WAY?

THE MASTER IS NOT DEAD, CHENDU-- THE HIGH LAMA CANNOT DIE! HIS FRAIL FLESH HAS PASSED AWAY--
BUT HIS IMMORTAL SPIRIT LIVES ON--IN THE BODY OF ANOTHER!
AYE--SO HAS IT ALWAYS BEEN!

SOMEWHERE ACROSS THE LAND, AN INFANT HAS BEEN BORN--THE REINCARNATION OF OUR MASTER--THE EMBODIMENT OF HIS VISIONS AND DREAMS!
WE MUST SEEK OUT THAT CHILD AT ANY COST-- FOR 'TIS HE WHO IS DESTINED TO LEAD OUR PEOPLE BACK TO THEIR HOMELAND!

WE MUST JOURNEY BACK TO TIBET--TO THE LAKE OF THE SACRED SPIRIT--
FOR THERE WE SHALL DISCOVER THE WHEREABOUTS OF OUR NEW-BORN MASTER!

AND WHEN THAT CHILD IS FOUND, 'TIS I--KAMSET-- WHO WILL RULE!
AND WOE BE UNTO ANY WHO DARES TO OPPOSE ME!
6

TIBET: ONCE THE LEGENDARY ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN WAS SAID TO ROAM ITS SNOW-CRESTED MOUNTAINS--BUT NOW SIX DARK-CLOAKED FORMS STEAL THROUGH THE SHADOWS OF THOSE LOFTY PEAKS, HEADING SILENTLY HOME...

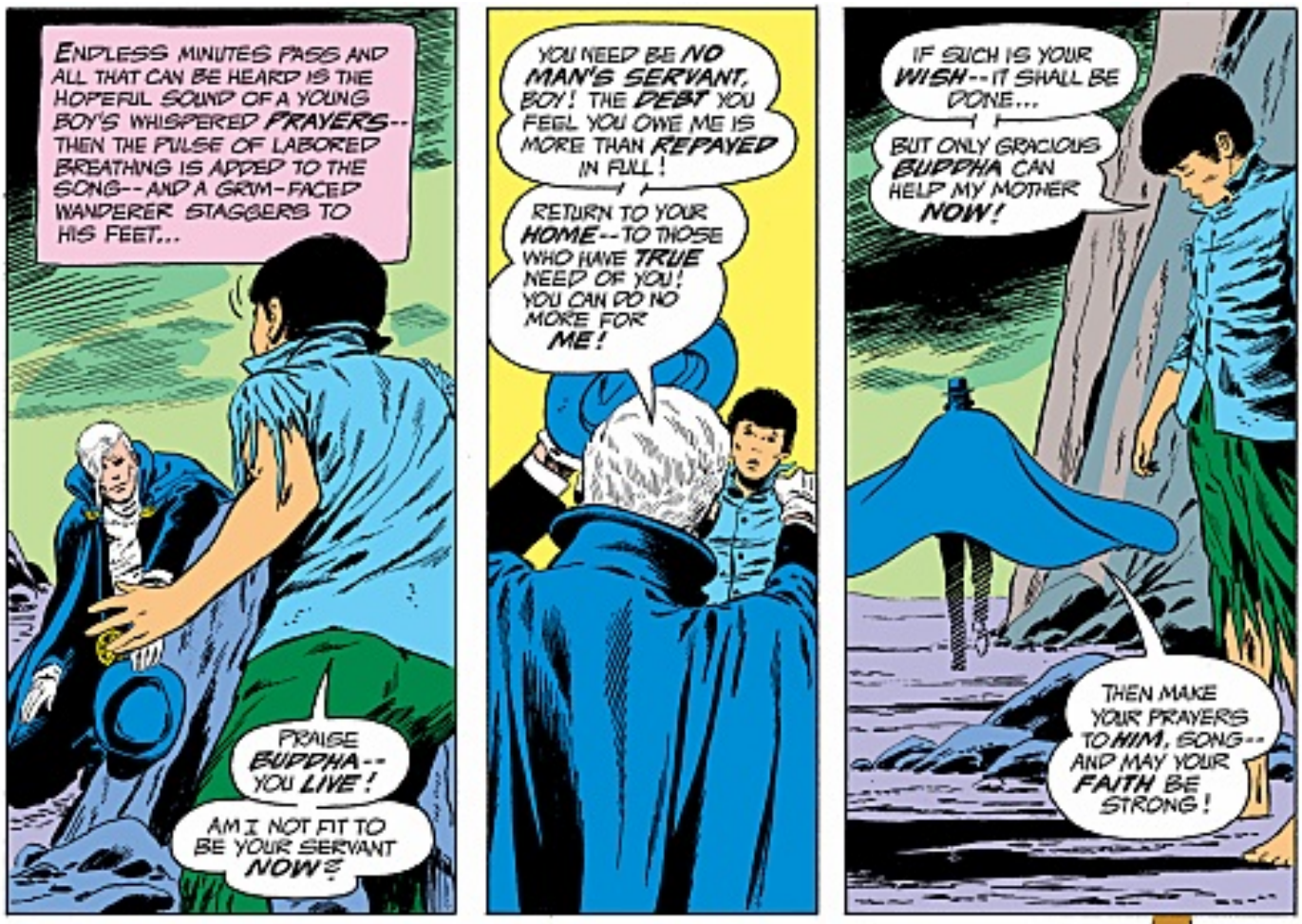
AND WHEN, AT LAST, THE JOURNEY IS DONE...
BUDDHA SMILES UPON US, MY BRETHREN --THE LAKE OF THE SACRED SPIRIT SLEEPS SERENELY!
SOON IT WILL SHOW US THE FACE OF THE ONE WE SEEK!

THE WEARY LIPS OF THE PILGRIM MONKS TREMBLE IN SILENT PRAYER --AND THERE IS MOVEMENT ON THE SURFACE OF THE PLACID LAKE...
THE MISTS OF EVENING SWIRL ABOVE THE CRYSTAL-CLEAR WATERS, CONGEALING SLOWLY TO FORM AN IMAGE --THE FACE OF A NEW-BORN BABE...
THERE, MY BRETHREN, IS THE CHILD WE MUST FIND--THE LIVING CONCEPTION OF OUR FUTURE..
THE NEW HIGH LAMA!
THIS INFANT WILL LEAD OUR FOLLOWERS HOME AGAIN--?

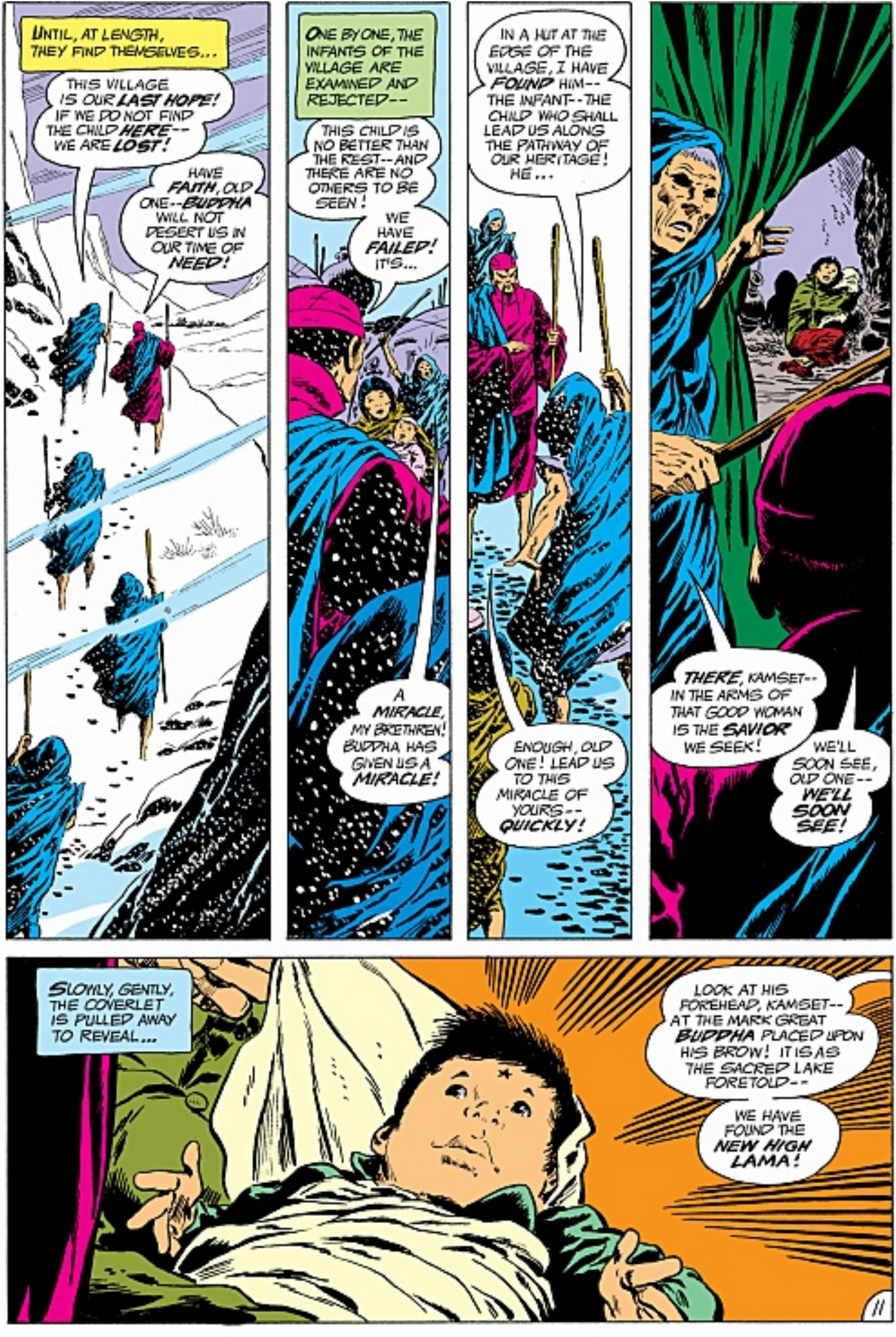
NO, YOU OLD FOOL-- THE CHILD WILL LEAD YOU TO HELL! HA HA HA...
BA-ATTA-TAT TAT TAT
ZIP ZIP
COMMUNIST SOLDIERS--WE ARE LOST!
7

ONLY THOSE WHO GIVE UP HOPE ARE LOST, OLD ONE!
AIEEE-- BUDDHA SENDS A MESSENGER TO DEFEND US!
UGHH
I WASN'T SENT, OLD ONE! I COME BECAUSE I'M NEEDED --NOTHING MORE THAN THAT!
THEN YOU ARE NOT HERE TO LEAD US TO OUR NEW MASTER?
I CANNOT LEAD YOU TO A DISHONEST DREAM! WHAT YOU SAW IN THE LAKE IS A DECEPTION--A FRAUD PERPETUATED BY ONE WHO WOULD BETRAY YOU!
LIAR! BLASPHEMER! YOU SEEK TO BLIND US TO THE VISION WE HAVE SEEN--
BUT BUDDHA WILL JUDGE THE TRUTH OF YOUR HARSH-SPOKEN WORDS!
?
ONCE AGAIN, THE LAKE WATERS RIPPLE--AND MADNESS SPEWS FROM THE DEPTHS...
WHAT--? THE SEDIMENT ON THE LAKE'S BOTTOM --HAS COME ALIVE!
PULLING ME INTO THE LAKE ITSELF!
BUDDHA HAS SPOKEN, MY BRETHREN! THE LAKE OF THE SACRED SPIRIT WILL METE OUT VENGEANCE UPON HIM WHO HAS BEFOULED ITS NAME!
8

AND AS THE COOL, CLEAR WATERS CLOSE ABOVE THE INK-GARBED INTRUDER'S HEAD...
JUSTICE IS DONE, MY BRETHREN! THE UNBELIEVER'S TONGUE HAS BEEN SILENCED FOREVER!
COME-- WE'VE MILES TO TRAVEL BEFORE OUR WANDERINGS THROUGH!
BUT AS THE SOUND OF SANDALED FOOTSTEPS DISAPPEARS OVER THE HILLSIDE...
THE TENTACLE IS STRONGER THAN IT APPEARS! PHYSICAL EFFORT ALONE WILL NOT OVERCOME IT...
BUT THE POWERS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ARE GREATER THAN ANY PHYSICAL LAW!
THE GRASPING TENDRIL IS DE-FEATED--BUT IT HAS DRAINED MY LIFE-FORCE DEARLY--
EVERYTHING GROWING DARKER-- DARK...
FOR LONG MOMENTS, THE BLACK-CLOAKED FIGURE FLOATS SILENTLY UPON THE SACRED POND'S EMOTIONLESS FACE-- THEN A SMALL, TATTERED SHAPE MOVES SWIFTLY FROM THE SHADOWS...
HE IS SO QUIET-- SO STILL!
GREAT BUDDHA-- MAY I NOT BE TOO LATE!
9


ENDLESS MINUTES PASS AND ALL THAT CAN BE HEARD IS THE HOPEFUL SOUND OF A YOUNG BOY'S WHISPERED PRAYERS-- THEN THE PULSE OF LABORED BREATHING IS ADDED TO THE SONG--AND A GRIM-FACED WANDERER STAGGERS TO HIS FEET...
PRAISE BUDDHA-- YOU LIVE!
AM I NOT FIT TO BE YOUR SERVANT NOW?
YOU NEED BE NO MAN'S SERVANT, BOY! THE DEBT YOU FEEL YOU OWE ME IS MORE THAN REPAYED IN FULL!
RETURN TO YOUR HOME--TO THOSE WHO HAVE TRUE NEED OF YOU! YOU CAN DO NO MORE FOR ME!
IF SUCH IS YOUR WISH--IT SHALL BE DONE...
BUT ONLY GRACIOUS BUDDHA CAN HELP MY MOTHER NOW!
THEN MAKE YOUR PRAYERS TO HIM, SONG-- AND MAY YOUR FAITH BE STRONG!

FAITH: A BELIEF, A CONVICTION SO POWERFUL THAT THE MOST STRENUOUS OF ONSLAUGHTS CANNOT WEAKEN ITS FABRIC--SUCH IS THE VISION THAT LEADS SIX WEARY MEN ACROSS THE WIDTH AND BREADTH OF THE LAND, SEEKING ETERNITY IN THE BODY OF A CHILD...
BUT FAILURE IS THE SPECTRE THAT HAUNTS THEM AT EVERY WAYWARD TURN...
10


UNTIL, AT LENGTH, THEY FIND THEMSELVES...
THIS VILLAGE IS OUR LAST HOPE! IF WE DO NOT FIND THE CHILD HERE-- WE ARE LOST!
HAVE FAITH, OLD ONE--BUDDHA WILL NOT DESERT US IN OUR TIME OF NEED!
ONE BY ONE, THE INFANTS OF THE VILLAGE ARE EXAMINED AND REJECTED--
THIS CHILD IS NO BETTER THAN THE REST--AND THERE ARE NO OTHERS TO BE SEEN!
WE HAVE FAILED! IT'S...
A MIRACLE, MY BRETHREN! BUDDHA HAS GIVEN US A MIRACLE!
IN A HUT AT THE EDGE OF THE VILLAGE, I HAVE FOUND HIM-- THE INFANT--THE CHILD WHO SHALL LEAD US ALONG THE PATHWAY OF OUR HERITAGE! HE...
ENOUGH, OLD ONE! LEAD US TO THIS MIRACLE OF YOURS-- QUICKLY!
THERE, KAMSET-- IN THE ARMS OF THAT GOOD WOMAN IS THE SAVIOR WE SEEK!
WE'LL SOON SEE, OLD ONE-- WE'LL SOON SEE!
SLOWLY, GENTLY, THE COVERLET IS PULLED AWAY TO REVEAL...
LOOK AT HIS FOREHEAD, KAMSET-- AT THE MARK GREAT BUDDHA PLACED UPON HIS BROW! IT IS AS THE SACRED LAKE FORETOLD--
WE HAVE FOUND THE NEW HIGH LAMA!

COME, BRETHREN--WE MUST SPREAD THE WORD--THE PEOPLE MUST BE TOLD--TODAY IS A DAY FOR REJOICING!
KAMSET--ARE YOU NOT WITH US?
I SHALL FOLLOW IN A MOMENT OR TWO, BRETHREN! YOU NEED NOT WAIT FOR ME!
AND AFTER THE OTHERS HAVE GONE...
WHAT TREACHERY IS THIS, WOMAN? THIS CHILD IS NOT THE CHILD I HAD PLANNED TO REVEAL AS THE NEW LAMA!
WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO GAIN BY INTERFERING WITH MY MASTER SCHEME? ANSWER ME, OR--!!
PLEASE, GREAT ONE--I KNOW NOTHING OF WHAT YOU SAY! Y-YOU ARE HURTING M-MY ARM!
I'LL PROVE THE FALSENESS OF YOUR WORDS, WOMAN! WITHOUT THE MARK, THE CHILD IS--
WHAT--? THE MARK--IT WON'T COME OFF! IT'S GENUINE!
I KNOW NOT WHAT GAME YOU'RE PLAYING, WOMAN--BUT YOU'LL TELL ME ALL I WANT TO KNOW OR I'LL BEAT IT OUT OF YOU!
THWCK
THE FRAIL FORM CRUMPLES TO THE FLOOR AND...
SHE'S DEAD! SHE SMASHED HER HEAD AGAINST THE WALL!
I'LL GET NO FURTHER ANSWERS FROM HER, BUT...
12

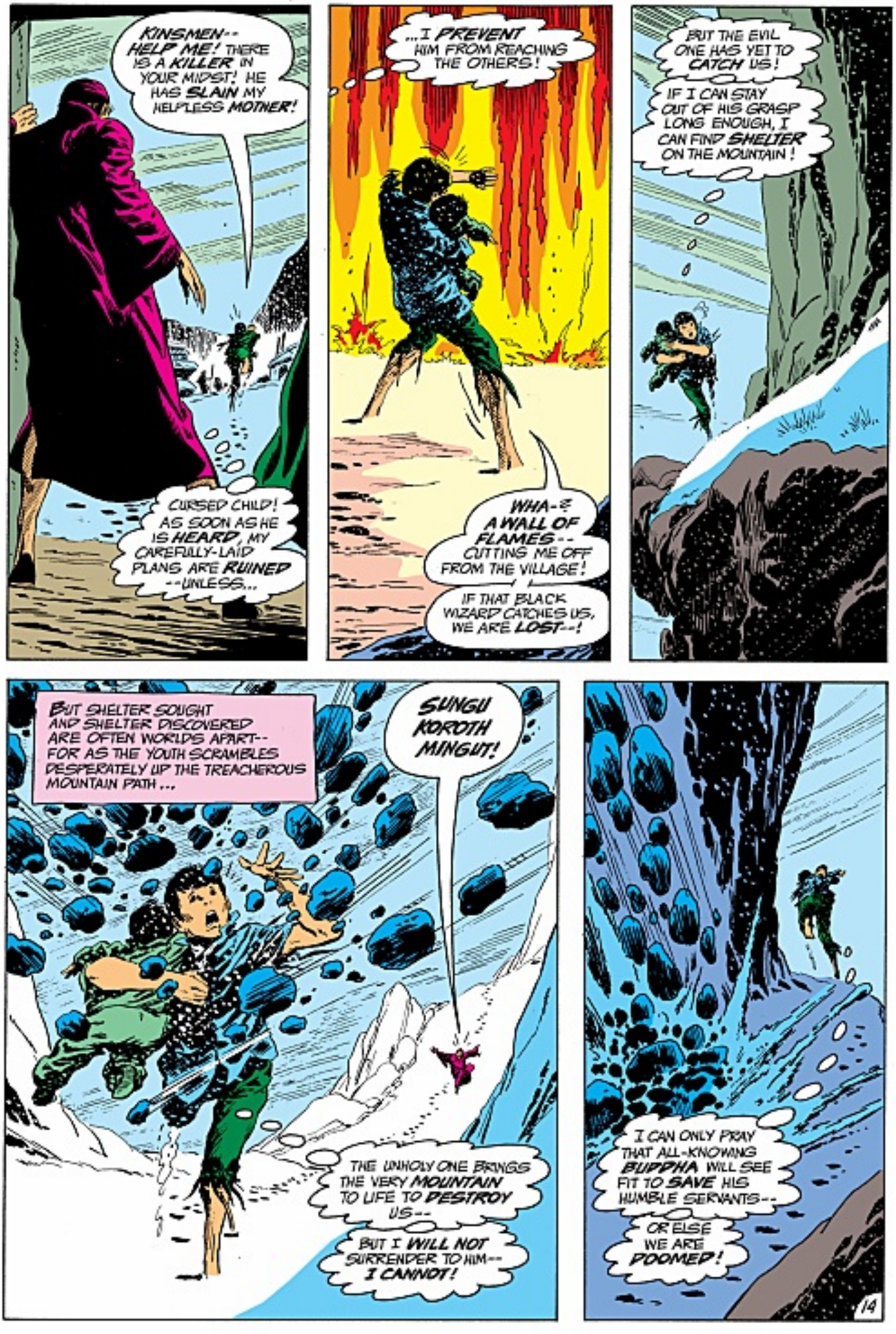
I NO LONGER NEED ANSWERS! I HAVE ONLY TO SLAY THIS CHILD AND REPLACE IT WITH THE INFANT I HAD ORIGINALLY PLANNED-- THE ONE WHOSE IMAGE I CONJURED ON THE SACRED LAKE!
ONE QUICK THRUST AND--
WAH-H

NO!! YOU HAVE DONE ENOUGH KILLING, EVIL ONE!
WHAT-?

YOU!? THE BEGGAR BOY I UTILIZED TO SLAY THE OLD LAMA!
IT'S BUDDHA'S WILL, WICKED ONE! YOU MAY HAVE SLAIN MY POOR MOTHER--
WHAT SARDONIC TWIST OF FATE BRINGS YOU HERE?

--BUT I'LL NOT LET YOU MURDER MY BABY BROTHER AS WELL!
THE CHILD IS YOUR BROTHER? I--
OOFFF!

YOU HAVE BETRAYED YOUR SACRED BONDS, DARK ONE! I WILL TELL THE OTHER HOLY MEN OF YOUR EVIL DEEDS...
AND MAKE PRAYERS TO BUDDHA FOR YOUR SWIFT AND MERCILESS DEATH!
BEGGAR, WAIT-- WAIT--!
13


KINSMEN--HELP ME! THERE IS A KILLER IN YOUR MIDST! HE HAS SLAIN MY HELPLESS MOTHER!
CURSED CHILD! AS SOON AS HE IS HEARD, MY CAREFULLY-LAID PLANS ARE RUINED --UNLESS...
...I PREVENT HIM FROM REACHING THE OTHERS!
WHA-? A WALL OF FLAMES-- CUTTING ME OFF FROM THE VILLAGE!
IF THAT BLACK WIZARD CATCHES US, WE ARE LOST--!
BUT THE EVIL ONE HAS YET TO CATCH US!
IF I CAN STAY OUT OF HIS GRASP LONG ENOUGH, I CAN FIND SHELTER ON THE MOUNTAIN!
BUT SHELTER SOUGHT AND SHELTER DISCOVERED ARE OFTEN WORLDS APART-- FOR AS THE YOUTH SCRAMBLES DESPERATELY UP THE TREACHEROUS MOUNTAIN PATH...
SUNGU KOROTH MINGUT!
THE UNHOLY ONE BRINGS THE VERY MOUNTAIN TO LIFE TO DESTROY US--
BUT I WILL NOT SURRENDER TO HIM-- I CANNOT!
I CAN ONLY PRAY THAT ALL-KNOWING BUDDHA WILL SEE FIT TO SAVE HIS HUMBLE SERVANTS--
OR ELSE WE ARE DOOMED!
14

TAKE HEART, SONG--YOU NO LONGER STRUGGLE ALONE!
YOU!?! BUT HOW--HOW?
YOU HAVE NEED OF ME, BOY--A NEED I CANNOT REFUSE!
WE STAND AGAINST YOUR ENEMY-TOGETHER!

AND AS THE VILLAINOUS MONK ROUNDS THE MOUNTAIN BEND...
SO--YOU INTRUDE AGAIN, DARK ONE--BUT ONLY TO MEET YOUR END!
FIRST YOU--THEN THE CHILDREN--AND ALL SHALL BE AS IT WAS! ONLY THE GODS WILL KNOW WHAT TRANSPIRED HERE THIS DAY!
I THINK NOT, KAMSET! TAKE A LOOK BEHIND YOU!

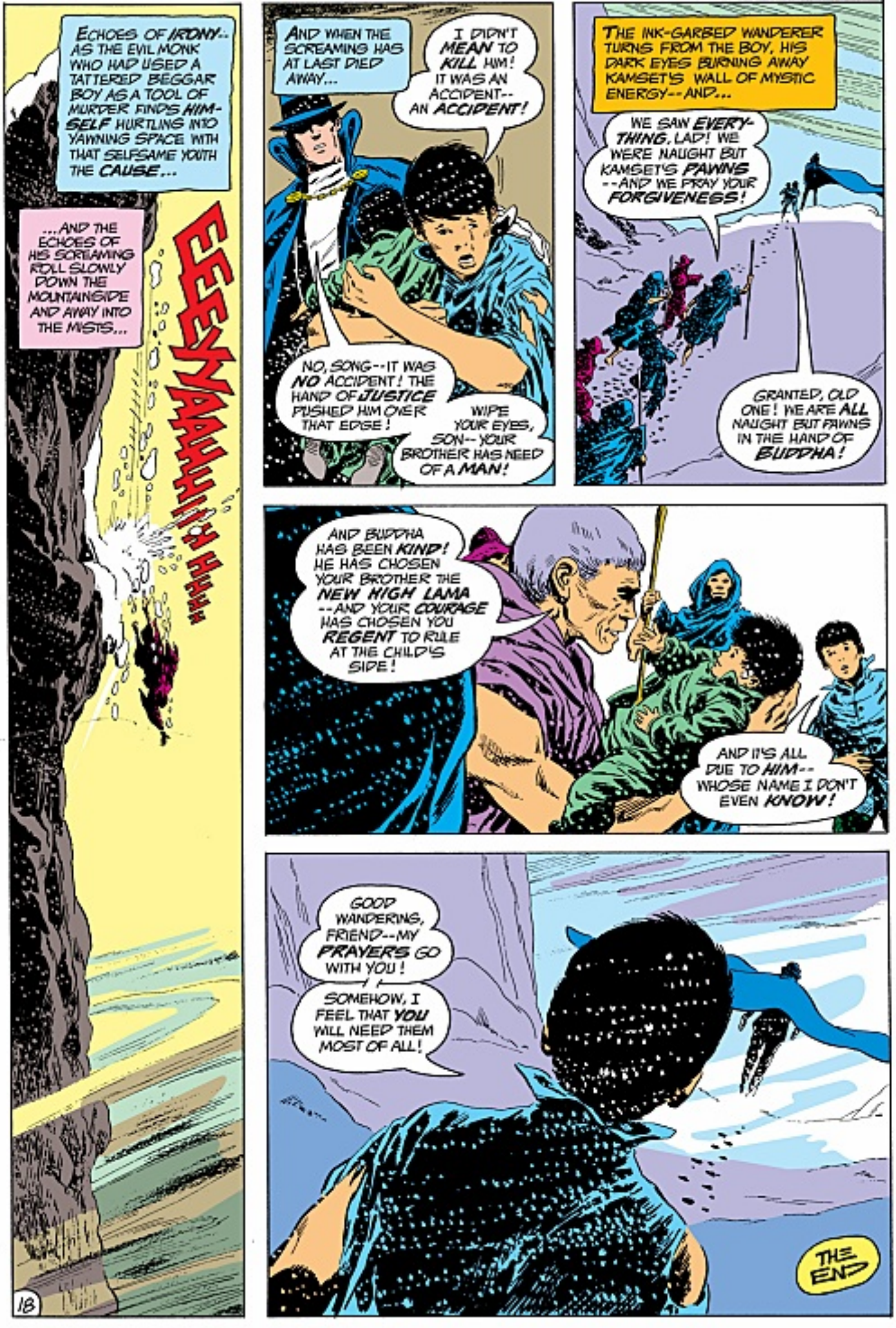
THE VILLAGERS! THEN THEY HEARD THE CURSED BOY'S WARNING!
IT APPEARS I WAS WRONG, STRANGER--WE SHALL HAVE AN AUDIENCE, AFTER ALL!..

...BUT IT WILL BE A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE, INDEED!
NOTHING CAN PENETRATE THE WALL OF MYSTIC FORCE THAT NOW STANDS BETWEEN US!

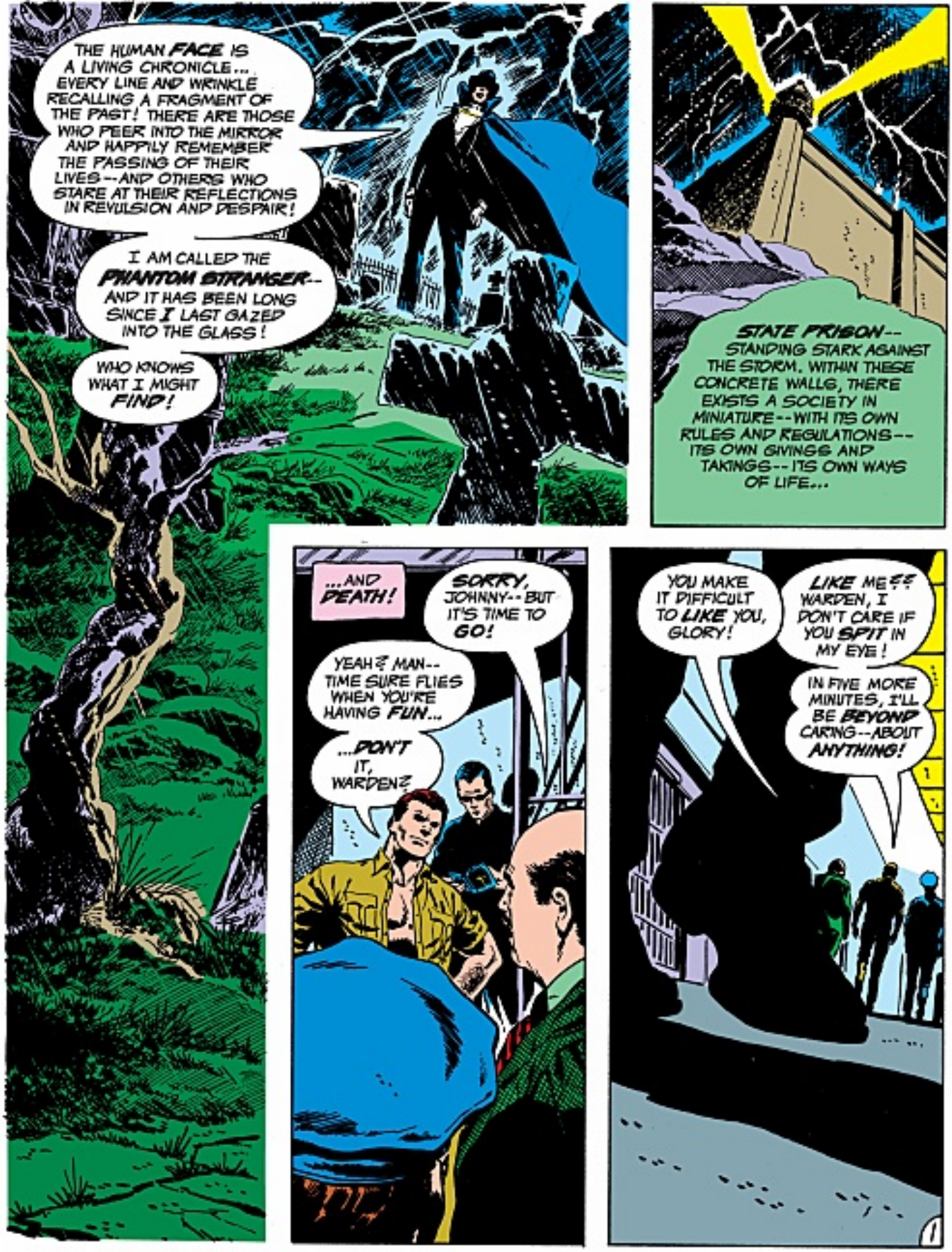
AND NOW, INTERLOPER--I WILL HAVE THAT INFANT!
15

THE ONLY PATH TO THAT CHILD IS THROUGH ME, KAMSET-- AND YOU WON'T FIND THAT AN EASY PATH TO TAKE!
PERHAPS, STRANGER-- AND PERHAPS NOT!
RENDU MOFID PLEX!
SMOKE DEMONS!! SPECTRAL THINGS THAT GROPE AND MAIM--BUT CANNOT BE TOUCHED IN RETURN!
THEY'RE TRYING TO STRANGLE ME!
AND THEY SHALL SUCCEED--AS THEY DID WITH THAT SENILE OLD LAMA WHO THOUGHT TO DEFY MY COMMANDS!
MY SINISTER SERVANTS SOON TAUGHT HIM THE ERROR OF HIS WAYS! HA HA HA HA HA!
THE ERROR IS YOURS, KAMSET-- FOR THINKING TO RULE THESE PEOPLE BY MYSTIC FORCE ALONE!
EVIL CANNOT LONG STAND BEFORE THE BLAZING LIGHT OF TRUTH!
BUT I AM NOT ALONE, STRANGER! THERE ARE OTHERS WHO STAND BEHIND ME--
--A PARK CIRCLE OF WIZARDS AND SORCERERS THAT TOUCHES THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE EARTH!
EVEN IF YOU STOOD WITH AN ARMY BESIDE YOU, KAMSET-- YOU COULDN'T TRIUMPH!
THERE IS FAR MORE POWER IN THE HEARTS OF THE RIGHTEOUS THAN IN ALL THE HOSTS OF CHAOS AND CORRUPTION COMBINED!
16

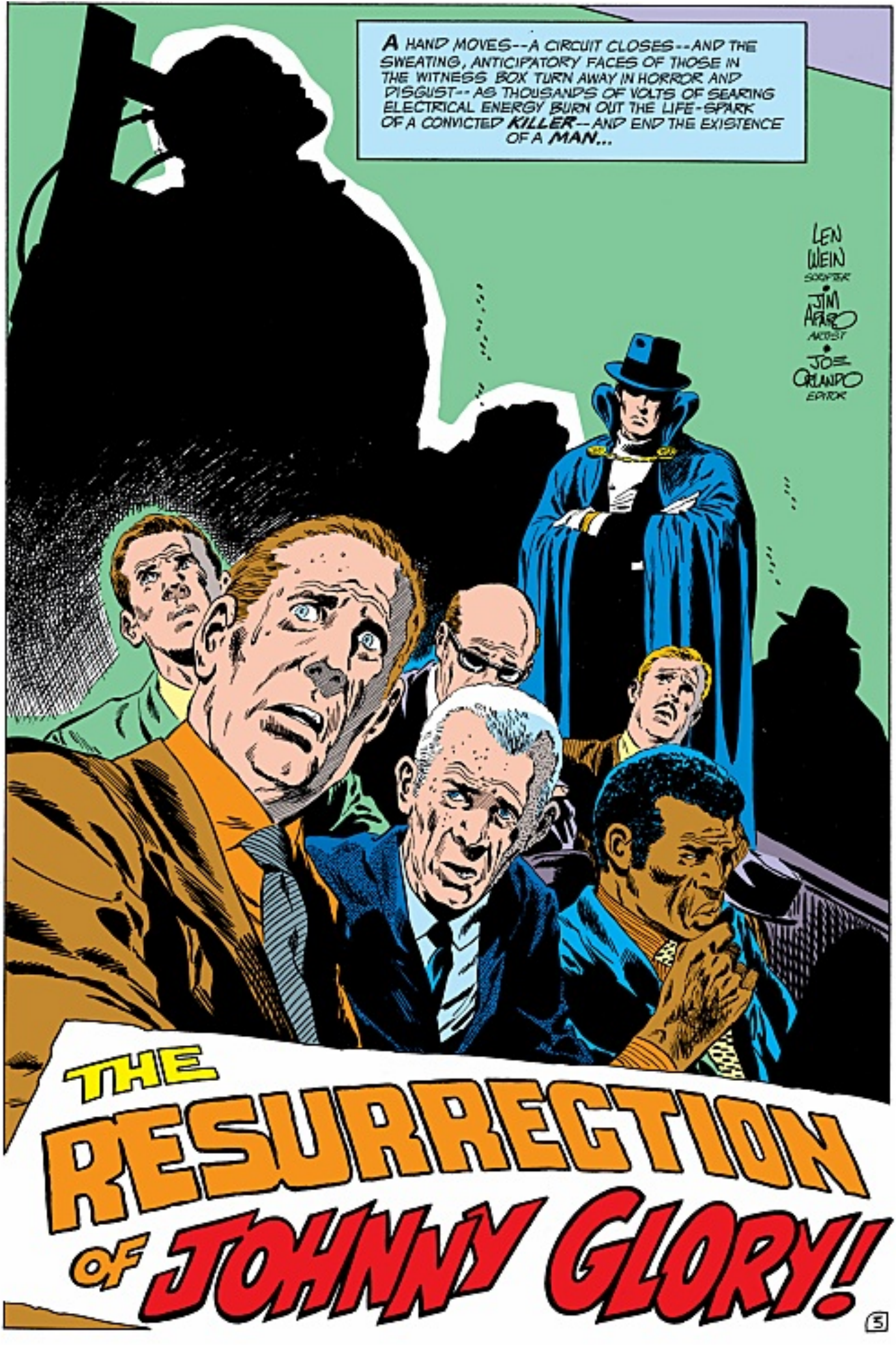
ENOUGH, DARK ONE--NO MORE SERMONS! VIRTUE MAY BE THE STAR YOU FOLLOW BUT--
ONLY SHEER STRENGTH OF WILL CAN TIP THE SCALES THIS DAY!
THEN THE TIME HAS COME TO WEIGH THOSE SCALES, KAMSET--AND SEE WHICH SIDE WEIGHS TRUE!
BUT THE SCALES OF FATE WEIGH PRECARIOUSLY THIS DAY. FOR LONG MOMENTS THEY TREMBLE, TILTING TO NEITHER SIDE--AND THEN...
THE BEGGAR BOY HAS FOUND HIMSELF A CHAMPION IN YOU, STRANGER-- BUT YOU BATTLE ON FOR NAUGHT!
ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, THE INFANT YOU STRUGGLE TO PROTECT WILL DIE!
SWOK
AND THE FORCES OF DARKNESS WILL SIT ME ON THE THRONE!
AND NOW, GUTTER SCUM-- IT IS TIME THE NEW LAMA WENT TO MEET HIS GODS!
NO! I WON'T LET YOU HURT HIM!
YOU HAVE NO CHOICE, FOOL-- IT'S...
NO! NOOOOO!
MY LEG! HE TRIPPED OVER MY LEG!
17

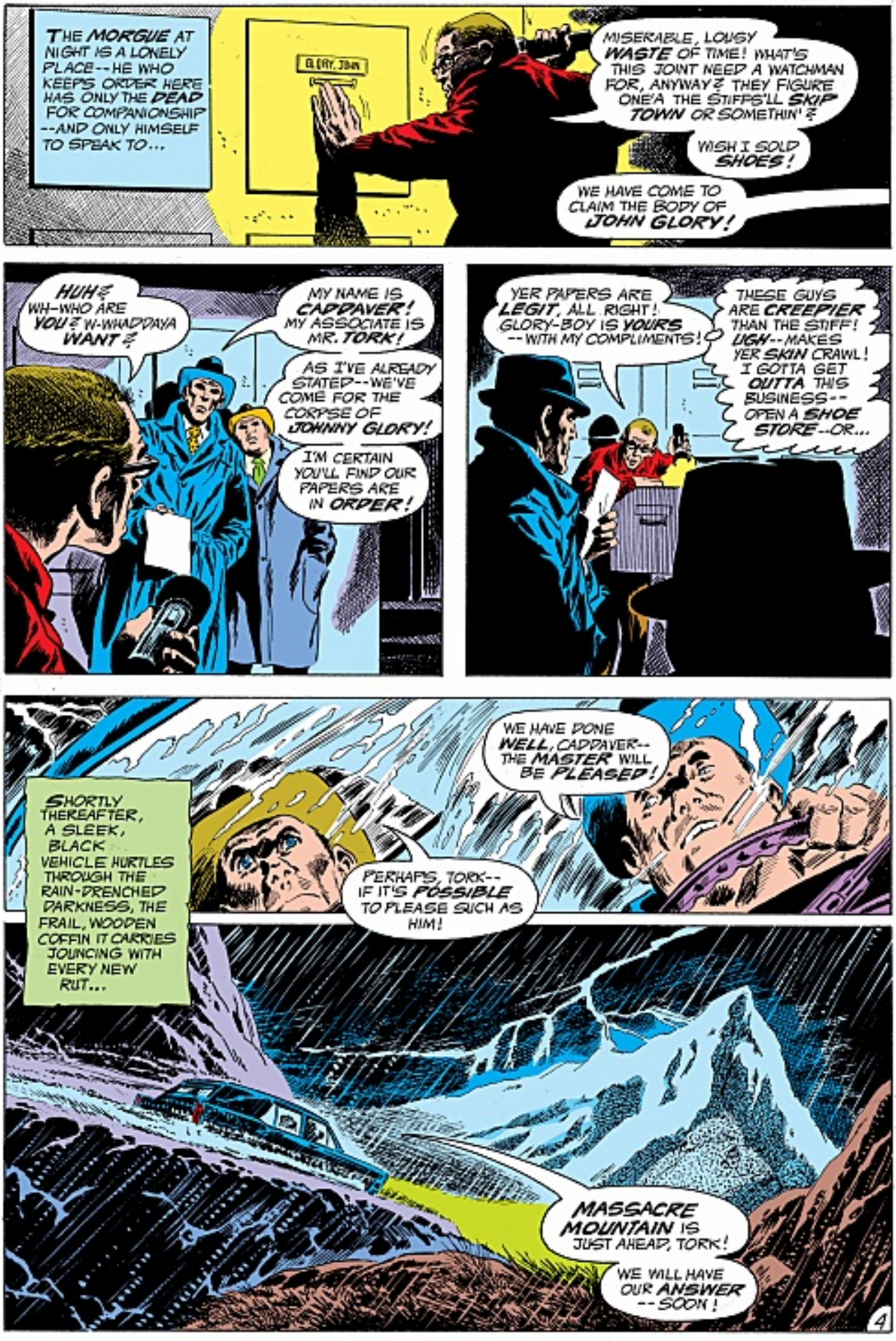

ECHOES OF IRONY.. AS THE EVIL MONK WHO HAD USED A TATTERED BEGGAR BOY AS A TOOL OF MURDER FINDS HIMSELF HURTLING INTO YAWNING SPACE WITH THAT SELFSAME YOUTH THE CAUSE...
...AND THE ECHOES OF HIS SCREAMING ROLL SLOWLY DOWN THE MOUNTAINSIDE AND AWAY INTO THE MISTS...
EEEYAAHHHH HHH...
18
AND WHEN THE SCREAMING HAS AT LAST DIED AWAY...
I DIDN'T MEAN TO KILL HIM! IT WAS AN ACCIDENT-- AN ACCIDENT!
NO, SONG--IT WAS NO ACCIDENT! THE HAND OF JUSTICE PUSHED HIM OVER THAT EDGE!
WIPE YOUR EYES, SON--YOUR BROTHER HAS NEED OF A MAN!
THE INK-GARBED WANDERER TURNS FROM THE BOY, HIS DARK EYES BURNING AWAY KAMSET'S WALL OF MYSTIC ENERGY--AND...
WE SAW EVERYTHING, LAD! WE WERE NAUGHT BUT KAMSET'S PAWNS --AND WE PRAY YOUR FORGIVENESS!
GRANTED, OLD ONE! WE ARE ALL NAUGHT BUT PAWNS IN THE HAND OF BUDDHA!
AND BUDDHA HAS BEEN KIND! HE HAS CHOSEN YOUR BROTHER THE NEW HIGH LAMA --AND YOUR COURAGE HAS CHOSEN YOU REGENT TO RULE AT THE CHILD'S SIDE!
AND IT'S ALL DUE TO HIM-- WHOSE NAME I DON'T EVEN KNOW!
GOOD WANDERING, FRIEND--MY PRAYERS GO WITH YOU!
SOMEHOW, I FEEL THAT YOU WILL NEED THEM MOST OF ALL!
THE END

Cover for **THE PHANTOM STRANGER #21** (1972)
Art by Jim Aparo

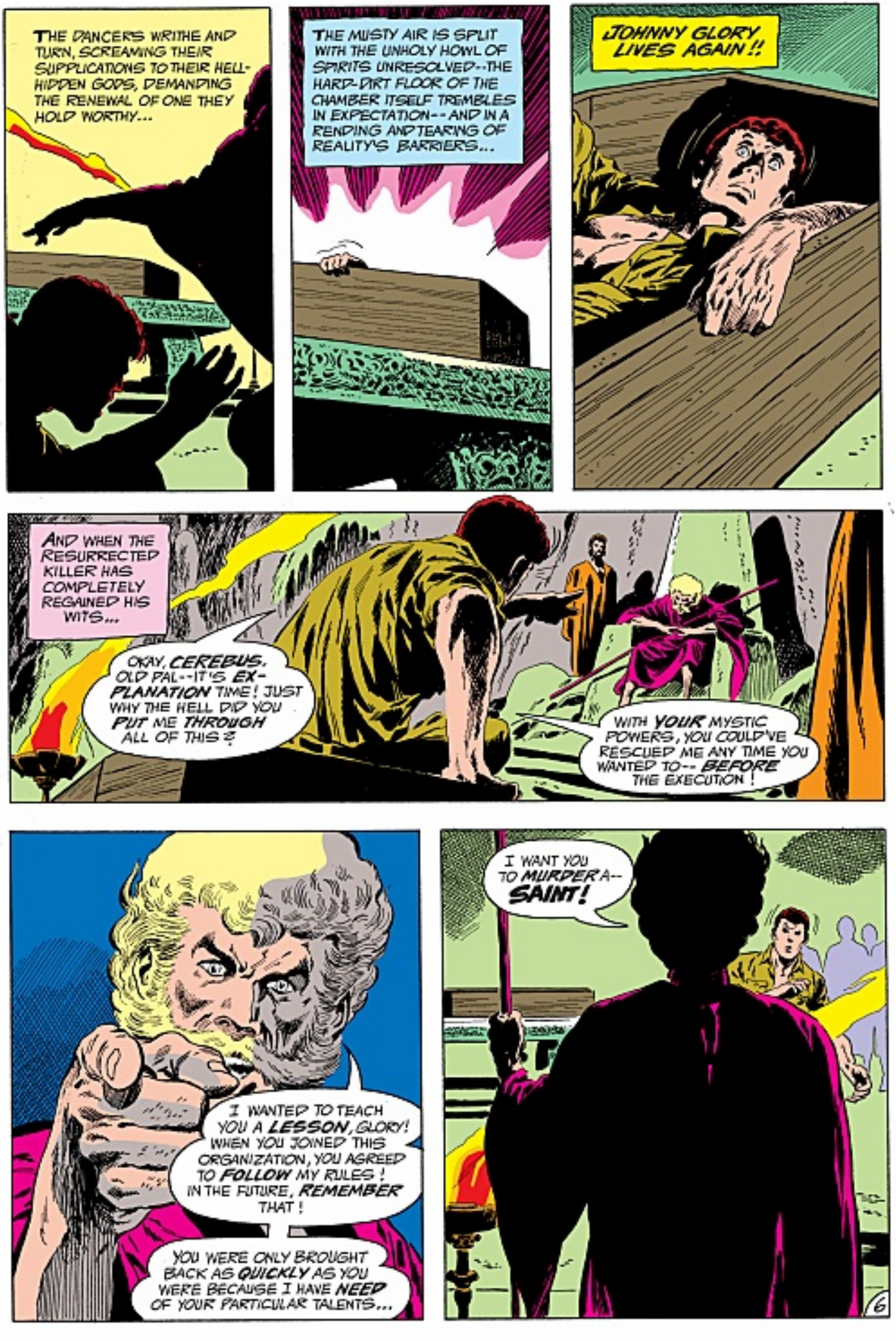

THE HUMAN FACE IS A LIVING CHRONICLE... EVERY LINE AND WRINKLE RECALLING A FRAGMENT OF THE PAST! THERE ARE THOSE WHO PEER INTO THE MIRROR AND HAPPILY REMEMBER THE PASSING OF THEIR LIVES--AND OTHERS WHO STARE AT THEIR REFLECTIONS IN REVULSION AND DESPAIR!
I AM CALLED THE PHANTOM STRANGER-- AND IT HAS BEEN LONG SINCE I LAST GAZED INTO THE GLASS!
WHO KNOWS WHAT I MIGHT FIND!
STATE PRISON-- STANDING STARK AGAINST THE STORM. WITHIN THESE CONCRETE WALLS, THERE EXISTS A SOCIETY IN MINIATURE--WITH ITS OWN RULES AND REGULATIONS-- ITS OWN GIVINGS AND TAKINGS-- ITS OWN WAYS OF LIFE...
...AND DEATH!
SORRY, JOHNNY-- BUT IT'S TIME TO GO!
YEAH? MAN-- TIME SURE FLIES WHEN YOU'RE HAVING FUN...
...DON'T IT, WARDEN?
YOU MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO LIKE YOU, GLORY!
LIKE ME?? WARDEN, I DON'T CARE IF YOU SPIT IN MY EYE!
IN FIVE MORE MINUTES, I'LL BE BEYOND CARING--ABOUT ANYTHING!

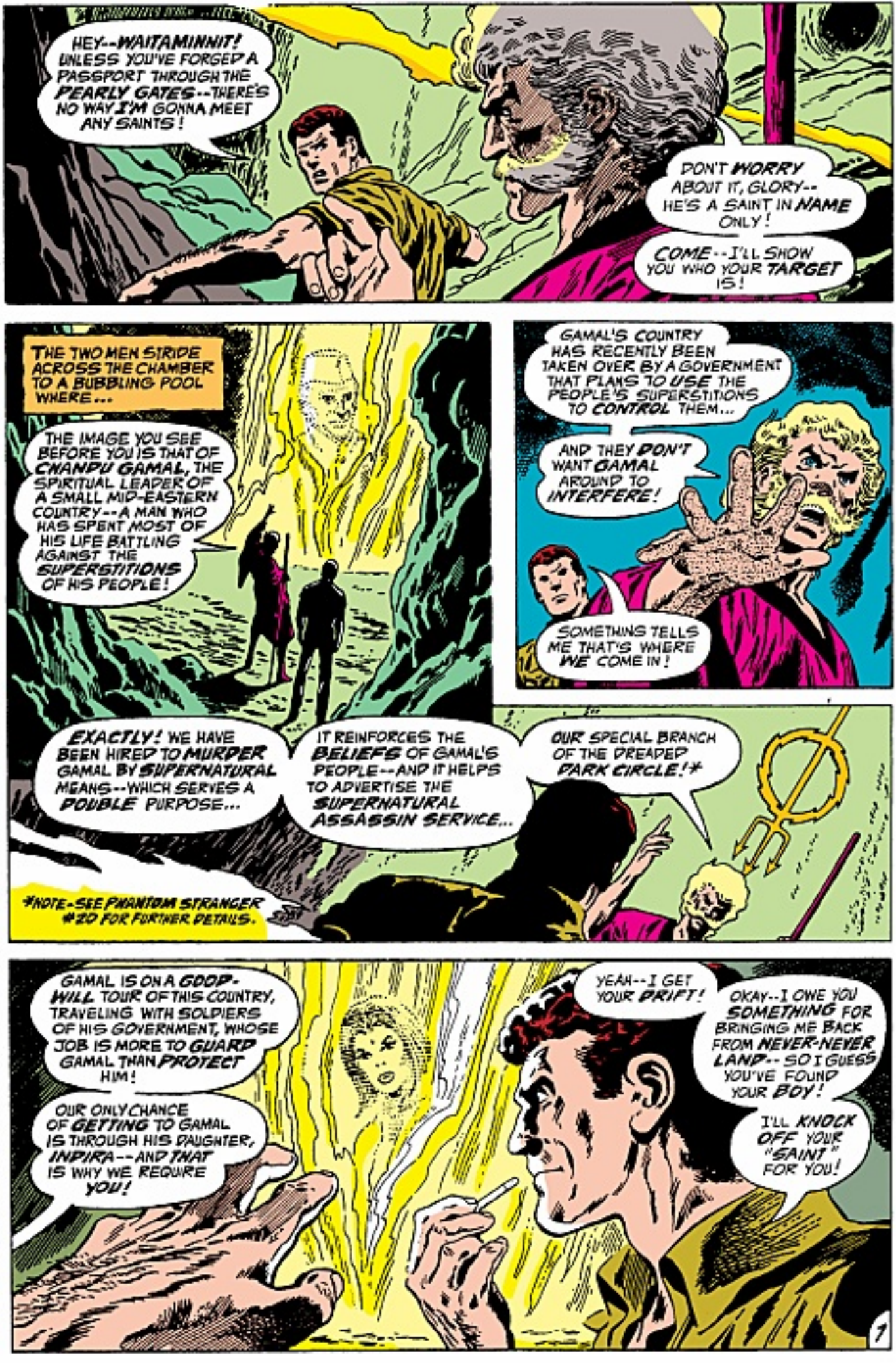
THE FINAL MOMENTS OF ONE'S **LIFE** ARE USUALLY **PRECIOUS**--FILLED WITH RECOLLECTION OF A TIME WELL SPENT, A JOB WELL DONE--BUT THESE ARE NOT THE THOUGHTS OF ONE **JOHNNY GLORY** AS HE WALKS THAT LAST BITTER MILE TO HIS **DEATH.** HIS ARE THOUGHTS OF **ANGER**--OF THE GRIM TRAIL OF **VIOLENCE** AND **MURDER** THAT LED HIM TO THIS TIME AND PLACE...


A HAND MOVES--A CIRCUIT CLOSES--AND THE SWEATING, ANTICIPATORY FACES OF THOSE IN THE WITNESS BOX TURN AWAY IN HORROR AND DISGUST--AS THOUSANDS OF VOLTS OF SEARING ELECTRICAL ENERGY BURN OUT THE LIFE-SPARK OF A CONVICTED KILLER--AND END THE EXISTENCE OF A MAN...
LEN WEIN SCRIPTER
JIM APARO ARTIST
JOE ORLANDO EDITOR
THE RESURRECTION OF JOHNNY GLORY!
5


THE MORGUE AT NIGHT IS A LONELY PLACE--HE WHO KEEPS ORDER HERE HAS ONLY THE DEAD FOR COMPANIONSHIP --AND ONLY HIMSELF TO SPEAK TO...
O. (MY. JOHN
MISERABLE, LOUSY WASTE OF TIME! WHAT'S THIS JOINT NEED A WATCHMAN FOR, ANYWAY? THEY FIGURE ONE'A THE STIFFS'LL SKIP TOWN OR SOMETHIN'?
WISH I SOLD SHOES!
WE HAVE COME TO CLAIM THE BODY OF JOHN GLORY!
HUH? WH-WHO ARE YOU? W-WHADDAYA WANT?
MY NAME IS CADDAVER! MY ASSOCIATE IS MR. TORK!
AS I'VE ALREADY STATED--WE'VE COME FOR THE CORPSE OF JOHNNY GLORY!
I'M CERTAIN YOU'LL FIND OUR PAPERS ARE IN ORDER!
YER PAPERS ARE LEGIT, ALL RIGHT! GLORY-BOY IS YOURS --WITH MY COMPLIMENTS!
THESE GUYS ARE CREEPIER THAN THE STIFF! UGH--MAKES YER SKIN CRAWL! I GOTTA GET OUTTA THIS BUSINESS-- OPEN A SHOE STORE--OR...
WE HAVE DONE WELL, CADDAVER-- THE MASTER WILL BE PLEASED!
PERHAPS, TORK-- IF IT'S POSSIBLE TO PLEASE SUCH AS HIM!
SHORTLY THEREAFTER, A SLEEK, BLACK VEHICLE HURTLES THROUGH THE RAIN-DRENCHED DARKNESS, THE FRAIL, WOODEN COFFIN IT CARRIES JOUNCING WITH EVERY NEW RUT...
MASSACRE MOUNTAIN IS JUST AHEAD, TORK!
WE WILL HAVE OUR ANSWER --SOON!
4

AND MOMENTS LATER THE CAVERN CUT DEEP INTO THE HEART OF MASSACRE MOUNTAIN REVERBERATES WITH THE SOUND OF STUMBLING FOOTSTEPS...
CAREFUL, YOU FOOL--OR YOU'LL DROP THE COFFIN!
IF THAT BODY IS HARMED, THE MASTER WILL SERVE US UP ON THE ALTAR OF THE DEAD!
THE COFFIN IS IN PLACE! EVERYTHING IS IN READINESS!
I CAN SEE THAT, YOU MISSHAPEN FOOL! STOP TALKING--AND GET PRESSED!
THE OTHERS WILL BE ARRIVING WITHIN MINUTES!
WE ARE NO LONGER ARRIVING, CADAVER--CEREBUS IS HERE!
MASTER! MY HEART FILLS WITH JOY AT YOUR PRESENCE!
WE HAVE DONE AS YOU COMMANDED, MOST BENEFICENT MASTER!
YOU ARE BOTH SLOBBERING SYCOPHANTS--BUT YOU HAVE DONE YOUR JOB WELL!
LET THE RITE OF RESURRECTION --BEGIN!!
THE RITE OF RESURRECTION--THE RAISING OF THE DEAD--THE SOUL-CHILLING RITUAL PERFORMED ONLY IN THE DARKEST OF DWELLINGS--AND THEN BY ONLY THE MOST CURSED OF MEN...
5


THE DANCERS WRITHE AND TURN, SCREAMING THEIR SUPPLICATIONS TO THEIR HELL-HIDDEN GODS, DEMANDING THE RENEWAL OF ONE THEY HOLD WORTHY...
THE MUSTY AIR IS SPLIT WITH THE UNHOLY HOWL OF SPIRITS UNRESOLVED--THE HARD-DIRT FLOOR OF THE CHAMBER ITSELF TREMBLES IN EXPECTATION--AND IN A RENDING AND TEARING OF REALITY'S BARRIERS...
JOHNNY GLORY LIVES AGAIN!!
AND WHEN THE RESURRECTED KILLER HAS COMPLETELY REGAINED HIS WITS...
OKAY, CEREBUS, OLD PAL--IT'S EX-PLANATION TIME! JUST WHY THE HELL DID YOU PUT ME THROUGH ALL OF THIS?
WITH YOUR MYSTIC POWERS, YOU COULD'VE RESCUED ME ANY TIME YOU WANTED TO--BEFORE THE EXECUTION!
I WANTED TO TEACH YOU A LESSON, GLORY! WHEN YOU JOINED THIS ORGANIZATION, YOU AGREED TO FOLLOW MY RULES! IN THE FUTURE, REMEMBER THAT!
YOU WERE ONLY BROUGHT BACK AS QUICKLY AS YOU WERE BECAUSE I HAVE NEED OF YOUR PARTICULAR TALENTS...
I WANT YOU TO MURDER A--SAINT!
6

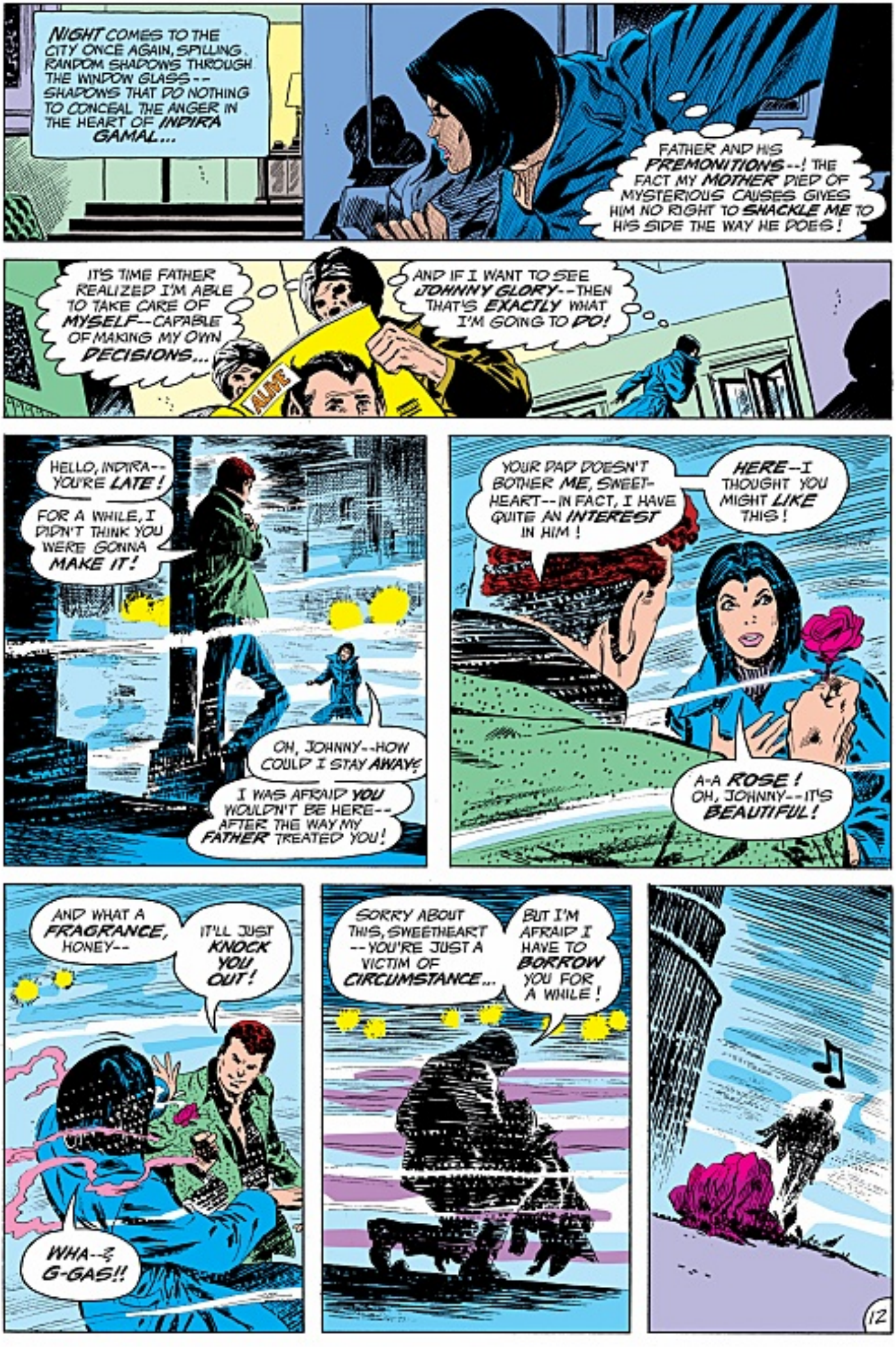

HEY--WAITAMINNIT! UNLESS YOU'VE FORGED A PASSPORT THROUGH THE PEARLY GATES--THERE'S NO WAY I'M GONNA MEET ANY SAINTS!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, GLORY--HE'S A SAINT IN NAME ONLY!
COME--I'LL SHOW YOU WHO YOUR TARGET IS!
THE TWO MEN STRIDE ACROSS THE CHAMBER TO A BUBBLING POOL WHERE...
THE IMAGE YOU SEE BEFORE YOU IS THAT OF CHANDU GAMAL, THE SPIRITUAL LEADER OF A SMALL MID-EASTERN COUNTRY--A MAN WHO HAS SPENT MOST OF HIS LIFE BATTLING AGAINST THE SUPERSTITIONS OF HIS PEOPLE!
GAMAL'S COUNTRY HAS RECENTLY BEEN TAKEN OVER BY A GOVERNMENT THAT PLANS TO USE THE PEOPLE'S SUPERSTITIONS TO CONTROL THEM...
AND THEY DON'T WANT GAMAL AROUND TO INTERFERE!
SOMETHING TELLS ME THAT'S WHERE WE COME IN!
EXACTLY! WE HAVE BEEN HIRED TO MURDER GAMAL BY SUPERNATURAL MEANS--WHICH SERVES A DOUBLE PURPOSE...
IT REINFORCES THE BELIEFS OF GAMAL'S PEOPLE--AND IT HELPS TO ADVERTISE THE SUPERNATURAL ASSASSIN SERVICE...
OUR SPECIAL BRANCH OF THE DREADED DARK CIRCLE!*
*NOTE-SEE PHANTOM STRANGER #20 FOR FURTHER DETAILS.
GAMAL IS ON A GOOD-WILL TOUR OF THIS COUNTRY, TRAVELING WITH SOLDIERS OF HIS GOVERNMENT, WHOSE JOB IS MORE TO GUARD GAMAL THAN PROTECT HIM!
OUR ONLY CHANCE OF GETTING TO GAMAL IS THROUGH HIS DAUGHTER, INDIRA--AND THAT IS WHY WE REQUIRE YOU!
YEAH--I GET YOUR DRIFT!
OKAY--I OWE YOU SOMETHING FOR BRINGING ME BACK FROM NEVER-NEVER LAND--SO I GUESS YOU'VE FOUND YOUR BOY!
I'LL KNOCK OFF YOUR "SAINT" FOR YOU!
7

TIME CURLS AWAY AND IT IS AFTERNOON ONCE MORE IN A BUSTLING NEW ENGLAND CITY, WHERE THE CHEERING CROWDS THAT LINE THE DUST-GRAY STREETS ARE TOUCHED BY THE GENTLE PRESENCE OF A VISITING VIP--THE SPIRITUAL SAVANT NAMED CHANDU GAMAL...
BUT IN ALL THINGS THERE IS A BALANCE--AND WHERE GENTLENESS HOLDS SWAY, CAN VIOLENCE BE FAR BEHIND?..
BLASPHEMER! TRAITOR OF YOUR PEOPLE! THE GREAT GOD, SIKIVA, HAS POINTED THE FINGER OF VENGEANCE AT LAST!
WHAT?--
BLAM
VENGEANCE IS A FLEETING THING, VILLAIN...
HUH?
...AND THE HAND RAISED IN RETRIBUTION IS OFTEN LOWERED IN SORROW!
UUNNHH--M-MY WRIST!! Y-YOU'RE BREAKING IT!
WE WILL TAKE OVER NOW, CITIZEN--YOUR INTERFERENCE IS NOT NEEDED!
YOUR "INTERFERENCE" SAVED THIS WORTHLESS LIFE, MY FRIEND--AND I AM GRATEFUL!
YOUR GRATITUDE IS APPRECIATED, CHANDU GAMAL--BUT UNNECESSARY!
THERE IS SOMETHING OF VALUE IN THE MOST HUMBLE OF LIVES--AND YOUR LIFE IS MORE WORTHY THAN MOST!
8

YOUR GUARDS HAVE THE SITUATION WELL IN HAND! THERE IS NO FURTHER NEED FOR ME HERE!
WITH YOUR PERMISSION-- I WILL TAKE MY LEAVE... EH?
NO-- PLEASE STAY A WHILE!
PLEASE--ENJOY THE REST OF THE FESTIVITIES FROM THE COMFORT OF MY CAR!
IT IS THE LEAST I CAN DO FOR ONE I OWE SO MUCH!
PERHAPS I WILL! IT HAS BEEN SOME TIME SINCE LAST I...
WAIT!!
EXCELLENCY, YOU CANNOT INVITE THIS OUTSIDER TO JOIN US! WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT HIM--WHO HE IS-- WHERE HE COMES FROM!
YOU THINK ME A THREAT? THEN LOOK DEEP INTO MY EYES...
TELL ME IF YOU SEE THE SPARK OF THE ASSASSIN THERE!
F-FORGIVE ME FOR DOUBTING YOU, SIR! I... I...
TH-THE LIMOUSINE IS W-WATING!
YOU SEE, MY FRIEND-- THERE IS NOTHING TO PREVENT YOUR ACCEPTING MY INVITATION!
COME-- SIT BY MY SIDE!
WE SHALL PASS THE REST OF THE PARADE IN PEACE!
9

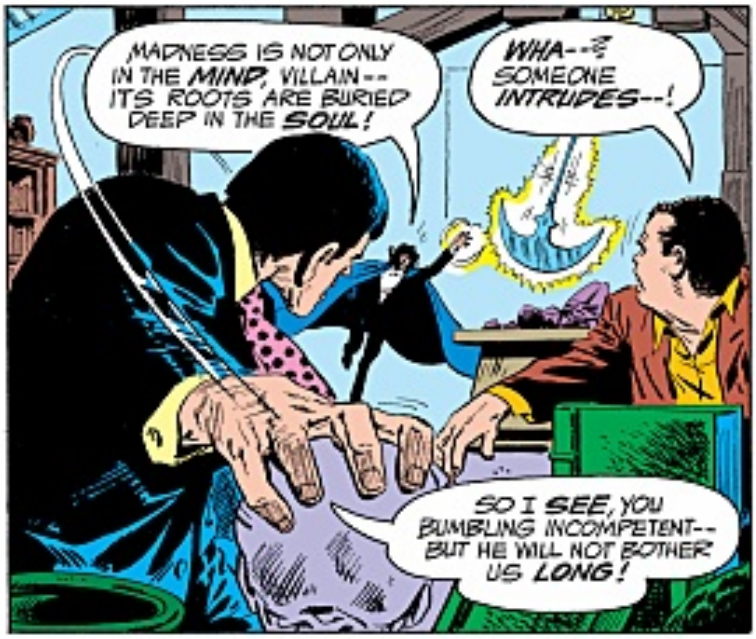
GRADUALLY, THE SMALL PROCESSION LOSES MOMENTUM, SLIDING TO A STOP BEFORE THE PILLARED PORTICO OF THE CITY'S MOST FASHIONABLE HOTEL...
YOUR OFFER IS GENEROUS, CHANDU GAMAL--BUT I CANNOT TARRY IN ANY ONE PLACE FOR LONG!
PLEASE--YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS ALLOWED MY PARTY AN ENTIRE FLOOR OF THIS LUXURIOUS ESTABUSHMENT! THERE IS AMPLE ROOM FOR GUESTS! I...EH?
HASSIM! WHAT SACRILEGIOUS IDIOCY IS THIS YOU WEAR AROUND YOUR NECK?
N-NOTHING, REVERED ONE --IT IS NOTHING!
NOTHING INDEED! HOW DARE YOU, HASSIM? ONE OF MY OWN GUARDS WEARING THE ACCURSED EFFIGY OF SIKIVA, THE FALSE GOD OF DEATH!?! I WILL NOT HEAR OF IT!
GO TO YOUR QUARTERS, YOU MISDIRECTED FOOL! I WILL DEAL WITH YOU LATER!
ANGER ILL BECOMES YOU, CHANDU GAMAL! WHY DOES A SIMPLE MEDALLION CAUSE SUCH KEEN RESENTMENT?
IT IS FAR MORE THAN A MEDALLION, MY FRIEND--IT IS THE SYMBOL OF EVERY-THING I OPPOSE!
I HAVE DEVOTED MY LIFE TO LEADING MY PEOPLE OUT OF THE SHADOW OF IGNORANCE AND INTO THE LIGHT OF REASON-- AND TO FIND THAT CURSED TALISMAN IN MY MIDST IS MORE THAN I CAN...
FOUND YOURSELF A POPIUM, FATHER?
10

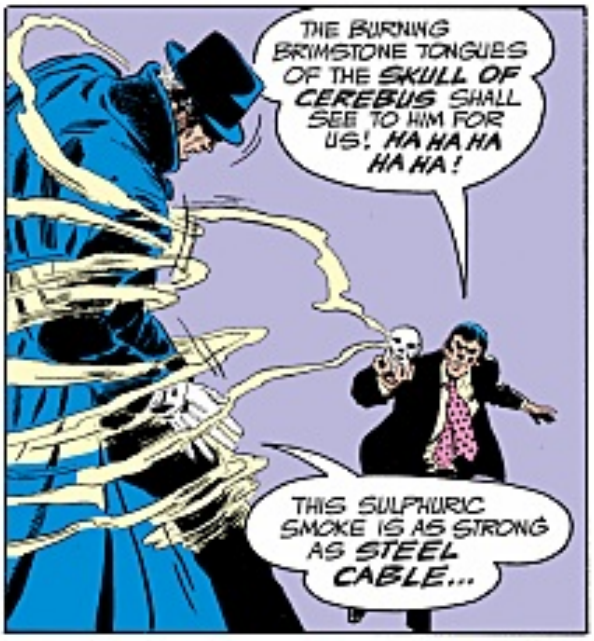
INDIRA! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ALL AFTERNOON, DAUGHTER? I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO WAIT FOR ME HERE!
HONESTLY, FATHER-- SOMETIMES YOU CAN BE SO OLD-FASHIONED--!
I WAS OUT SEEING THE CITY-- WITH A RATHER HANDSOME GENTLEMAN AS MY ESCORT!
FATHER, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET JOHN GLORY! HE TOOK PITY ON THIS WAYWARD TOURIST-- AND GUIDED ME ABOUT TO ALL THE MAJOR LANDMARKS!
THANK YOU, MR. GLORY--FOR TAKING CARE OF MY CHILD!
MY PLEASURE, SIR-- GLAD TO BE OF SERVICE!
NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE US--? MY DAUGHTER AND I HAVE MUCH TO DISCUSS!
OF COURSE, SIR!
FATHER? I...
BY THE WAY, INDIRA-- DON'T FORGET OUR DATE! I'LL SEE YOU LATER!
INDIRA--WHERE HAVE I GONE WRONG WITH YOU, CHILD? WHY DO YOU PERSIST IN DISOBEYING ME?
MAYBE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED LATELY, FATHER-- BUT I'M A BIG GIRL NOW...
OLD ENOUGH TO DECIDE FOR MYSELF EXACTLY WHAT'S RIGHT FOR ME!
I ONLY DO WHAT I DO FOR YOUR OWN GOOD, CHILD! DO YOU THINK I WANT TO HAVE YOU TAKEN FROM ME AS YOUR MOTHER WAS?
NO, INDIRA-- YOU MUST NEVER SEE YOUR MR. GLORY AGAIN! THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THAT MAN THAT TROUBLES ME!
11


NIGHT COMES TO THE CITY ONCE AGAIN, SPILLING RANDOM SHADOWS THROUGH THE WINDOW GLASS--SHADOWS THAT DO NOTHING TO CONCEAL THE ANGER IN THE HEART OF INDIRA GAMAL...
FATHER AND HIS PREMONITIONS--! THE FACT MY MOTHER DIED OF MYSTERIOUS CAUSES GIVES HIM NO RIGHT TO SHACKLE ME TO HIS SIDE THE WAY HE DOES!
IT'S TIME FATHER REALIZED I'M ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF MYSELF--CAPABLE OF MAKING MY OWN DECISIONS...
AND IF I WANT TO SEE JOHNNY GLORY--THEN THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I'M GOING TO DO!
ALM
HELLO, INDIRA--YOU'RE LATE!
FOR A WHILE, I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE GONNA MAKE IT!
OH, JOHNNY--HOW COULD I STAY AWAY!
I WAS AFRAID YOU WOULDN'T BE HERE--AFTER THE WAY MY FATHER TREATED YOU!
YOUR DAD DOESN'T BOTHER ME, SWEETHEART--IN FACT, I HAVE QUITE AN INTEREST IN HIM!
HERE--I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE THIS!
A-A ROSE! OH, JOHNNY--IT'S BEAUTIFUL!
AND WHAT A FRAGRANCE, HONEY--
IT'LL JUST KNOCK YOU OUT!
WHA--? G-GAS!!
SORRY ABOUT THIS, SWEETHEART--YOU'RE JUST A VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCE...
BUT I'M AFRAID I HAVE TO BORROW YOU FOR A WHILE!
12

AND A SHORT WHILE LATER, IN THE SPACIOUS CHAMBERS OF THE GREAT SPIRITUAL LEADER HIMSELF...
GUARDS! MY GUARDS!! COME QUICKLY-- QUICKLY!!
WHAT IS IT, EXCELLENCY? WHAT IS WRONG?
THIS PAPER--IT IS A RANSOM NOTE! AGENTS OF MY ENEMIES IN THE HOMELAND HAVE TAKEN MY DARLING INDIRA!
BUT WHAT CAN WE DO, EXCELLENCY? THIS SORT OF MATTER SHOULD BE DEALT WITH BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT! IT IS OUT OF OUR JURISDICTION!
NONSENSE! YOU MEN KNOW THE WAYS OF OUR ENEMY FAR BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE! YOUR CHANCES OF FINDING HER WOULD BE INFINITELY BETTER!
NOW GO-- AND DO NOT RETURN UNTIL YOU HAVE HER!
ARE YOU CERTAIN YOU'RE DOING THE CORRECT THING, CHANDU GAMAL?
MY FRIEND!? I DID NOT HEAR YOU ENTER!
I HAVE-- AND IT DISTURBS ME DEEPLY!
YOU HAVE HEARD THE NEWS?
THERE IS FAR MORE IN JEOPARDY HERE THAN SOME WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE!
13
W-WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
YOU WILL SOON UNDERSTAND ALL, CHANDU GAMAL-- BUT THERE ARE PIECES OF THE TAPESTRY YET TO BE WOVEN!
I AM GOING TO FIND YOUR DAUGHTER, CHANDU GAMAL! KEEP HEART TILL I RETURN!

ELSEWHERE, THE MIDNIGHT SCREAMS SILENTLY, SPREADING RIPPLES OF RAW FEAR ACROSS THE FACE OF THE MELANCHOLY MOON...
A MOST FASCINATING EXPERIMENT, IS IT NOT, MR. CADDAVER?
INDEED IT IS, MR. TORK! I AM CURIOUS TO SEE HOW MUCH THE WOMAN CAN ENDURE--
--BEFORE HER MIND SNAPS, COMPLETELY!


MADNESS IS NOT ONLY IN THE MIND, VILLAIN-- ITS ROOTS ARE BURIED DEEP IN THE SOUL!
WHA--? SOMEONE INTRUDES--!
SO I SEE, YOU BUMBLING INCOMPETENT-- BUT HE WILL NOT BOTHER US LONG!


THE BURNING BRIMSTONE TONGUES OF THE SKULL OF CEREBUS SHALL SEE TO HIM FOR US! HA HA HA HA HA!
THIS SULPHURIC SMOKE IS AS STRONG AS STEEL CABLE...

...BUT THE POWER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS STRONGER STILL!
CADDAVER-- DO SOMETHING! STOP HIM!
JOHNNY GLORY WILL HAVE OUR HEARTS IF THE WOMAN ESCAPES!
SHUT UP, YOU FOOL! GIVE ME A CHANCE TO THINK!

SCOUNDRELS, YOU RELINQUISHED YOUR RIGHT TO THINK-- WHEN YOU TURNED YOUR FACES TO THE PATH OF EVIL!
KRASK
14

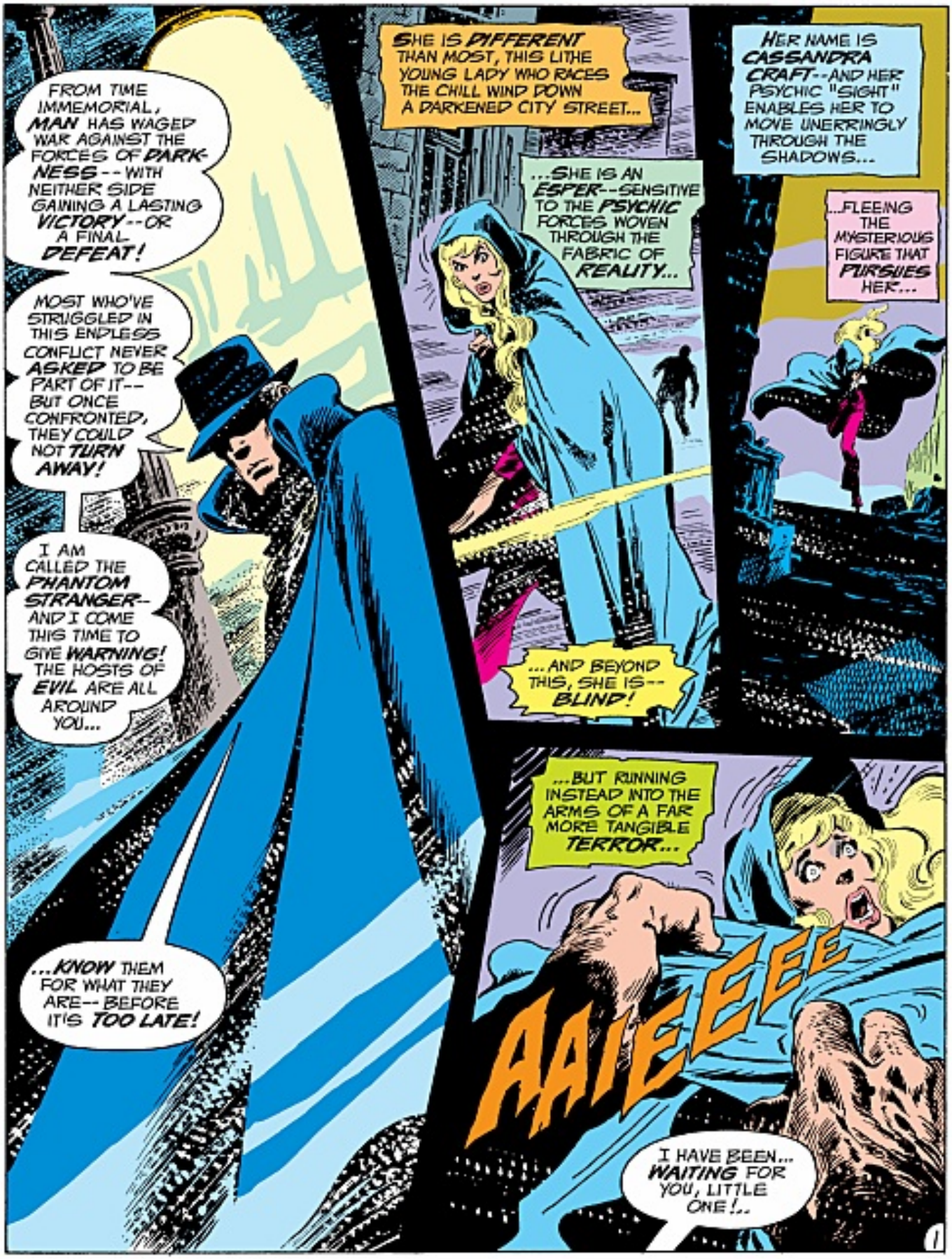
YOU!? Y-YOU'RE THE MAN WHO WAS WITH MY FATHER THIS AFTERNOON!
B-BUT WHO ARE YOU? WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS FOR US?
THAT DOES NOT MATTER NOW! THE ONLY IMPORTANT THING IS RETURNING YOU TO YOUR FATHER--BEFORE HIS BURDEN OF WORRY BECOMES TOO MUCH TO BEAR!
AND IN THE DARKENED CHAMBERS OF CHANDU GAMAL...
INDIRA, MY DAUGHTER--THIS IS ALL MY FAULT! HAVE I BEEN TOO STRICT WITH YOU--TOO UNMOVING?
WHERE DID I GO WRONG?
WHEN YOU TURNED AWAY FROM THE OLD WAYS, CHANDU GAMAL--AND TRIED TO LEAD YOUR PEOPLE INTO SACRILEGE!
IMPOSSIBLE! IT CAN'T BE! YOU ARE ONLY A MYTH USED TO ENSLAVE MY PEOPLE!
NO, CHANDU--I AM VERY REAL! THE DEATH-GOD, SIKIVA, HAS COME TO TAKE HIS FULL MEASURE OF VENGEANCE AT LAST!
NO! I WILL NOT BE FOOLED! THIS IS A TRICK--ONLY A TRICK!!
GET OUT--OR I WILL KILL YOU!
FOOL! YOU CANNOT KILL A GOD!
HA HA HA
BLAM BLA
15

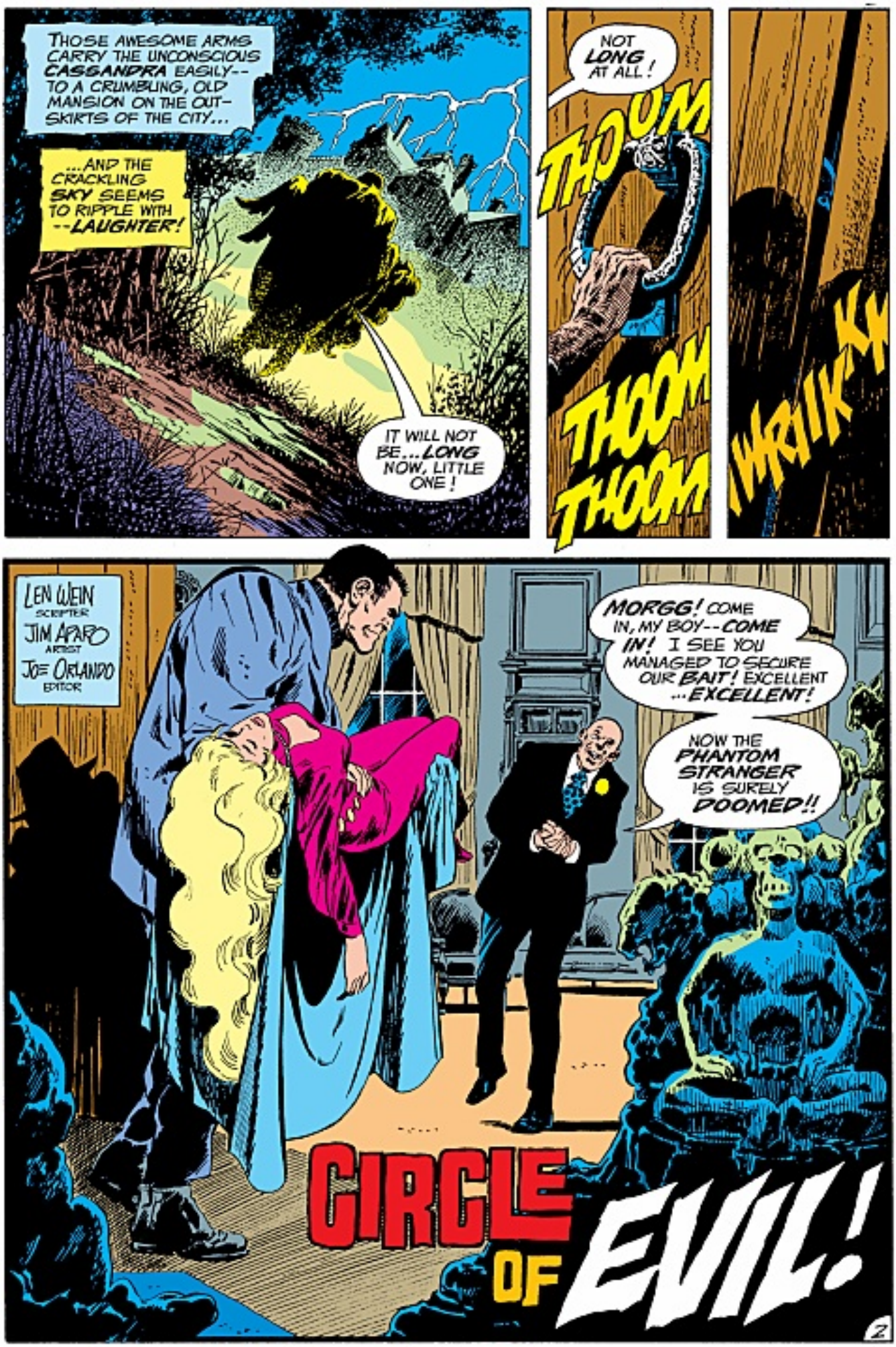
DEATH IS NOT YOURS TO GIVE THIS NIGHT, CHANOU GAMAL --BUT MINE!
LET THE SERPENTS OF GORGON CARESS YOU--AND TURN YOUR FLESH TO STONE!
NO! DON'T--! PLEASE--DON'T!
NEITHER IS DEATH YOURS TO COMMAND THIS NIGHT..., "SPIRIT"!
MY FRIEND-- AGAIN YOU SAVE MY LIFE!
THE DREADFUL FORCES ARE AS THESE SNAKES --HELPLESS BEFORE THE BLAZING LIGHT OF TRUTH!
SO MUST IT BE WITH YOUR SPECTRAL DISGUISE-- JOHNNY GLORY!!
SO YOU KNOW WHO I REALLY AM! WHAT GOOD WILL THAT DO YOU?
GAZE INTO THE MIRROR, JOHNNY GLORY! SEE YOURSELF FOR WHAT YOU REALLY ARE!
YOU'RE RUNNING OFF AT THE MOUTH, PAL! I KNOW WHAT I'M REALLY LIKE-- AND I HAPPEN TO ENJOY...
NOO!! OH, MY DEAR LORD--NO! NOOOOOOO!!
16

MY GOD--WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HIS--!
UUNNHH! M-MY HEART! THE PAIN--IT'S... UUHHNNNN
NO--! A HEART ATTACK! IT'S KILLING HIM!
CHANDU GAMAL--LISTEN TO ME! YOU WILL NOT DIE! IT IS NOT YET YOUR TIME!
THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO WAIT FOR YOU--WHO NEED YOU TO LEAD THEM INTO THE FUTURE! YOU WILL NOT DENY THEM THAT CHANCE!
LIVE, CHANDU GAMAL! DO YOU HEAR ME? LIVE!!
W-WHERE AM I? WHAT HAS HAPPENED? W-WHERE HAS THE OTHER ONE GONE?
HE HAS FLED, CHANDU GAMAL--BUT HE HAS NOT ESCAPED!
NO MAN CAN ESCAPE HIS DESTINY!
DESTINY IS A ROAD WITH MANY PATHS--SOME LEAD ONWARD TO FINAL RESOLUTION WHILE OTHERS TURN BACK UPON THEMSELVES IN CONFUSION--SUCH IS THE PATH THAT LEADS TO MASSACRE MOUNTAIN...
JOHNNY, YOU'RE BACK--BUT SO SOON? GAMAL IS DEAD, I PRESUME?
NO, CEREBUS--I'M THE ONE WHO'S DEAD!
SO--YOU KNOW THE T-TRUTH, DO YOU?
I KNOW, CEREBUS, THAT EVERYTHING I'VE BEEN SINCE THE MOMENT YOU RESURRECTED ME IS NOTHING BUT A LOUSY LIE--A STINKING ILLUSION!
WHY, CEREBUS?..
17

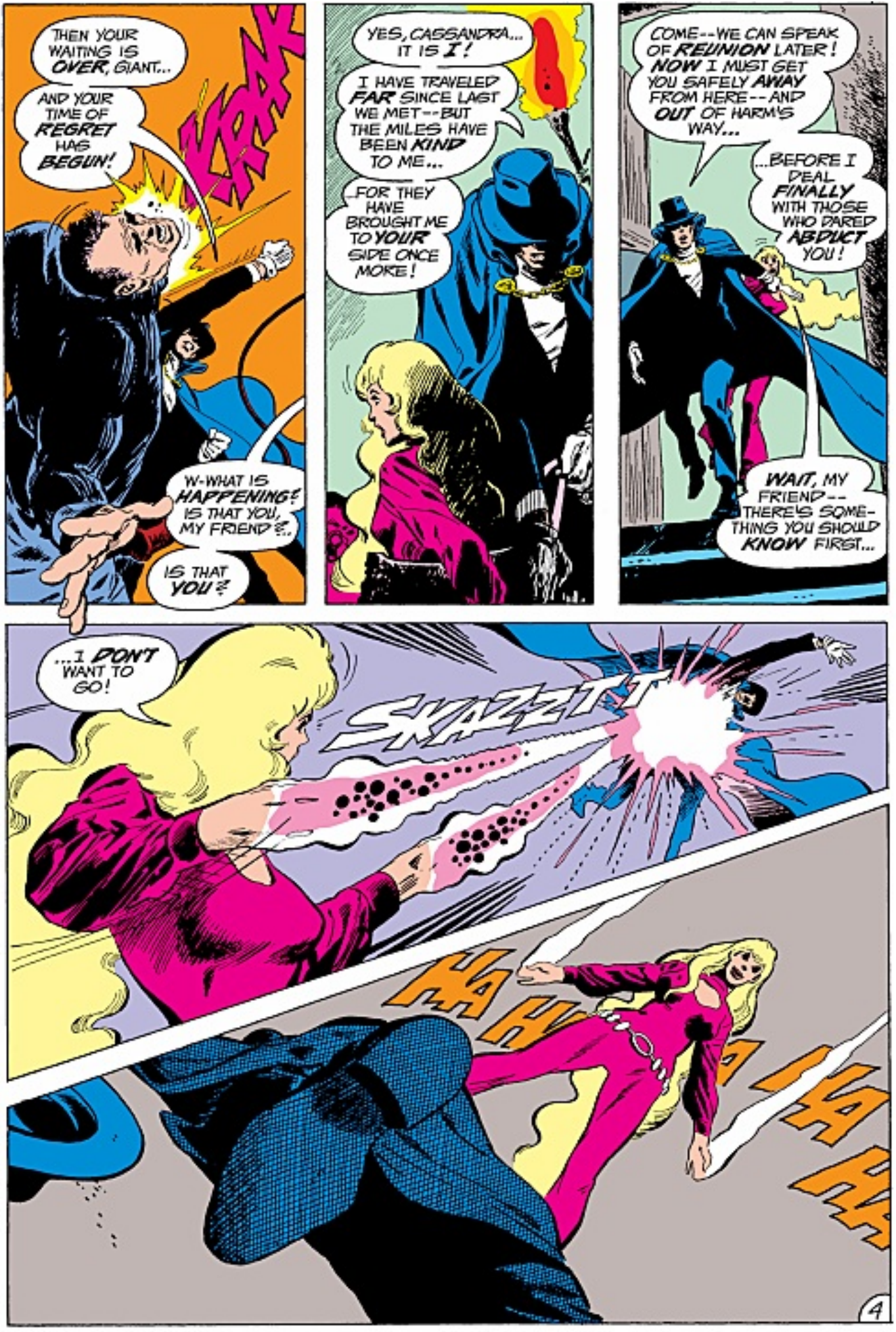
WHY DID YOU TURN ME INTO-- THIS?!
JOHNNY--WAIT! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! WE DID WHAT WE DID FOR YOU!
IT WAS THE ONLY WAY WE COULD REVIVE YOU! THE RITE OF RESURRECTION IS NOT WITHOUT ITS COSTS!
BUT MY FACE--! I'D RATHER HAVE STAYED DEAD--THAN TO LIVE LIKE THIS!
YOU DID NOTHING FOR ME, CEREBUS! YOU BROUGHT ME BACK FOR YOUR NEEDS, NOT MINE!
YOU SHOULD HAVE LEFT ME IN HELL!
JOHNNY-- NO--NOT INTO THE SPIRIT-POOL!
TO UPSET IT IS TO DOOM US ALL!
NOOO
KWAWHAM
IT IS ENDED-- AS IT MUST EVER END!
WHEN ALL IS CONSIDERED-- THE FLICKERING FLAME OF EVIL BURNS ONLY ITSELF!
THE END
18

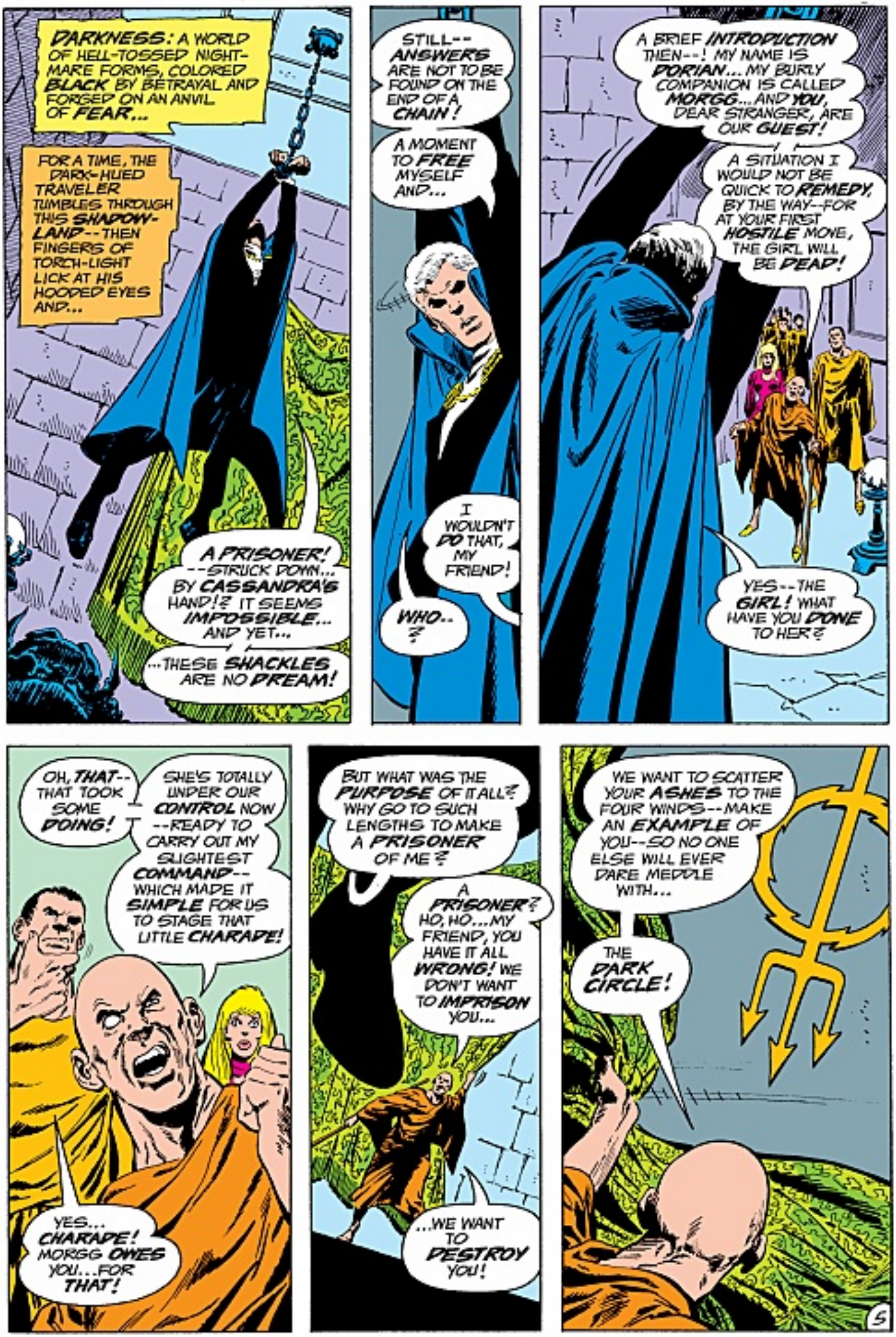
Cover for **THE PHANTOM STRANGER #22** (1972)
Art by Jim Aparo


FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL, MAN HAS WAGED WAR AGAINST THE FORCES OF DARKNESS--WITH NEITHER SIDE GAINING A LASTING VICTORY--OR A FINAL DEFEAT!
MOST WHO'VE STRUGGLED IN THIS ENDLESS CONFLICT NEVER ASKED TO BE PART OF IT--BUT ONCE CONFRONTED, THEY COULD NOT TURN AWAY!
I AM CALLED THE PHANTOM STRANGER--AND I COME THIS TIME TO GIVE WARNING! THE HOSTS OF EVIL ARE ALL AROUND YOU...
...KNOW THEM FOR WHAT THEY ARE--BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
SHE IS DIFFERENT THAN MOST, THIS LITHE YOUNG LADY WHO RACES THE CHILL WIND DOWN A DARKENED CITY STREET...
...SHE IS AN ESPER--SENSITIVE TO THE PSYCHIC FORCES WOVEN THROUGH THE FABRIC OF REALITY...
...AND BEYOND THIS, SHE IS--BLIND!
HER NAME IS CASSANDRA CRAFT--AND HER PSYCHIC "SIGHT" ENABLES HER TO MOVE UNERRINGLY THROUGH THE SHADOWS...
...FLEEING THE MYSTERIOUS FIGURE THAT PURSUES HER...
...BUT RUNNING INSTEAD INTO THE ARMS OF A FAR MORE TANGIBLE TERROR...
AAIEEEE
I HAVE BEEN... WAITING FOR YOU, LITTLE ONE!..


THOSE AWESOME ARMS CARRY THE UNCONSCIOUS CASSANDRA EASILY-- TO A CRUMBLING, OLD MANSION ON THE OUT-SKIRTS OF THE CITY...
...AND THE CRACKLING SKY SEEMS TO RIPPLE WITH --LAUGHTER!
IT WILL NOT BE...LONG NOW, LITTLE ONE!
NOT LONG AT ALL!
THOOM
THOOM
THOOM
IWRIIKK
LEN WEIN SCRIPTER
JIM APARO ARTIST
JOE ORLANDO EDITOR
MORGG! COME IN, MY BOY--COME IN! I SEE YOU MANAGED TO SECURE OUR BAIT! EXCELLENT ...EXCELLENT!
NOW THE PHANTOM STRANGER IS SURELY DOOMED!!
CIRCLE OF EVIL!
2

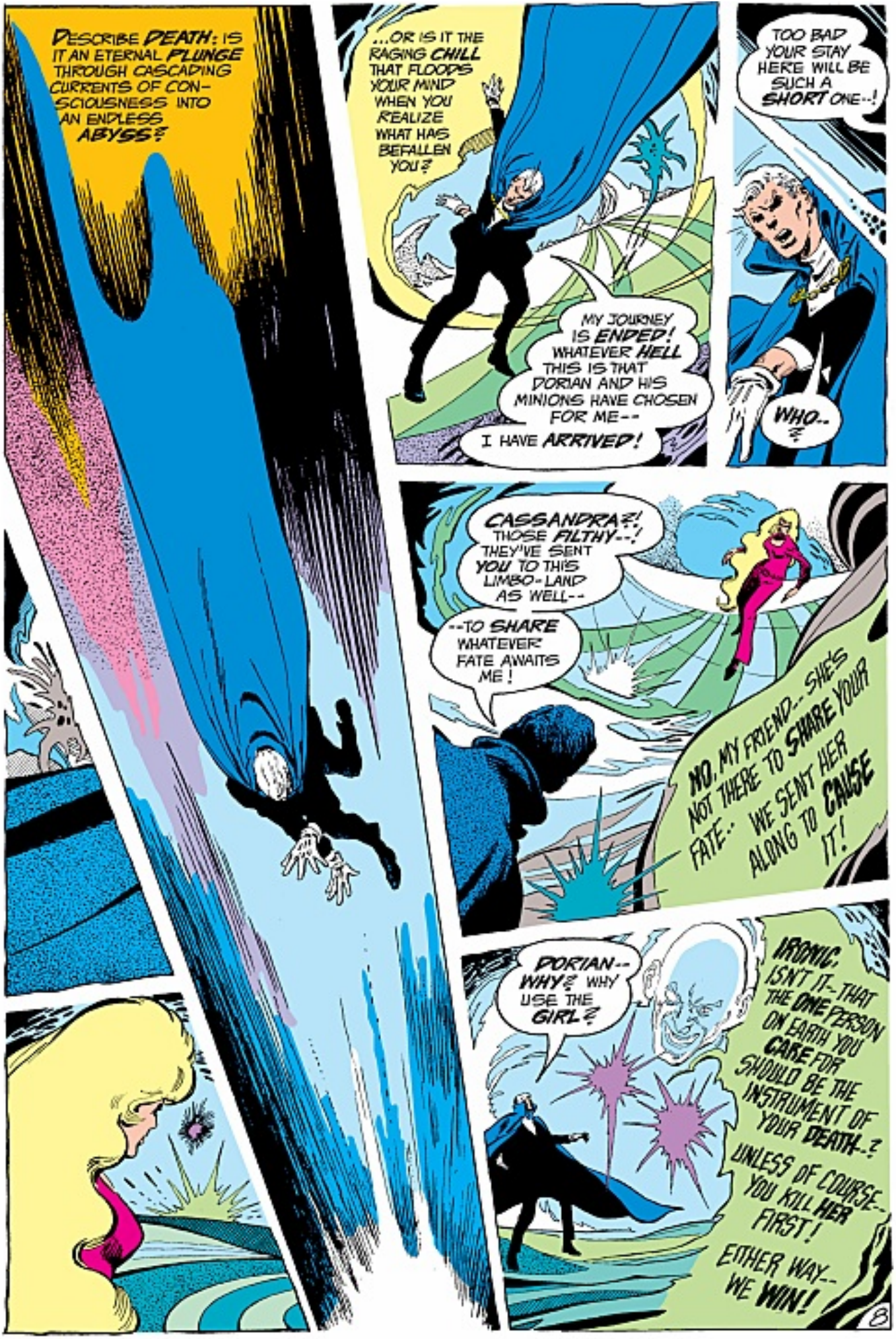
AT NIGHT, THE CITY IS A NEON WEB THAT STITCHES SILVER STRANDS OF STREETLIGHTS ACROSS THE DARKENED LANDSCAPE...
...AND CAUSES A CERTAIN BLACK-CLOAKED FIGURE TO PAUSE IN HIS TRAVELS --AND PONDER...
FASCINATING--THAT A RACE OF BEINGS WHO COULD CREATE SUCH BEAUTY CAN CAUSE SO MUCH CARNAGE AS WELL! THEY...
BUT BEFORE THE SOLEMN STRANGER CAN CONTINUE HIS MEDITATION...
HELP ME-MY FRIEND.... HELP ME.... PLEASE.. HELLLLP MEEEEEEEE
CASSANDRA!-- HER PSYCHIC POWER--CALLING ACROSS THE MILES!
SHE HAS NEED OF ME SOMEWHERE...
...AND I MUST ANSWER THAT NEED-- BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!
AND IT MAY BE TOO LATE SOONER THAN THE INK-GARBED WANDERER REALIZES--FOR AT THAT VERY MOMENT...
NO USE TO... STRUGGLE, LITTLE ONE! THERE IS NO... ESCAPE! THE ONE WE SEEK WILL... BE HERE SOON...
BUT UNTIL THEN, THERE ARE... GAMES MORGG CAN PLAY!
NO!-- NOOOOOO!
YOURS ARE "GAMES" TO SHATTER THE MIND, EVIL ONE...
...AND YOU SHALL PLAY THEM NO MORE!
YOU!? WE HAVE... WAITED FOR YOUR COMING!
3


THEN YOUR WAITING IS OVER, GIANT...
AND YOUR TIME OF REGRET HAS BEGUN!
KRAK
W-WHAT IS HAPPENING! IS THAT YOU, MY FRIEND?..
IS THAT YOU?
YES, CASSANDRA... IT IS I!
I HAVE TRAVELED FAR SINCE LAST WE MET--BUT THE MILES HAVE BEEN KIND TO ME...
...FOR THEY HAVE BROUGHT ME TO YOUR SIDE ONCE MORE!
COME--WE CAN SPEAK OF REUNION LATER! NOW I MUST GET YOU SAFELY AWAY FROM HERE--AND OUT OF HARM'S WAY...
...BEFORE I DEAL FINALLY WITH THOSE WHO DARED ABDUCT YOU!
WAIT, MY FRIEND--THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW FIRST...
...I DON'T WANT TO GO!
SKAZZT
HA HA HA
4


DARKNESS: A WORLD OF HELL-TOSSED NIGHTMARE FORMS, COLORED BLACK BY BETRAYAL AND FORGED ON AN ANVIL OF FEAR...
FOR A TIME, THE DARK-HUED TRAVELER TUMBLES THROUGH THIS SHADOW-LAND--THEN FINGERS OF TORCH-LIGHT LICK AT HIS HOODED EYES AND...
A PRISONER! --STRUCK DOWN... BY CASSANDRA'S HAND!? IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE... AND YET...
...THESE SHACKLES ARE NO DREAM!
STILL-- ANSWERS ARE NOT TO BE FOUND ON THE END OF A CHAIN!
A MOMENT TO FREE MYSELF AND...
I WOULDN'T DO THAT, MY FRIEND!
WHO..?
A BRIEF INTRODUCTION THEN--! MY NAME IS DORIAN... MY BURLY COMPANION IS CALLED MORGG... AND YOU, DEAR STRANGER, ARE OUR GUEST!
A SITUATION I WOULD NOT BE QUICK TO REMEDY, BY THE WAY--FOR AT YOUR FIRST HOSTILE MOVE, THE GIRL WILL BE DEAD!
YES--THE GIRL! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HER?
OH, THAT--THAT TOOK SOME DOING!
SHE'S TOTALLY UNDER OUR CONTROL NOW --READY TO CARRY OUT MY SLIGHTEST COMMAND-- WHICH MADE IT SIMPLE FOR US TO STAGE THAT LITTLE CHARADE!
YES... CHARADE! MORGG OWES YOU...FOR THAT!
BUT WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF IT ALL? WHY GO TO SUCH LENGTHS TO MAKE A PRISONER OF ME?
A PRISONER? HO, HO...MY FRIEND, YOU HAVE IT ALL WRONG! WE DON'T WANT TO IMPRISON YOU...
...WE WANT TO DESTROY YOU!
WE WANT TO SCATTER YOUR ASHES TO THE FOUR WINDS--MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF YOU--SO NO ONE ELSE WILL EVER DARE MEDDLE WITH...
THE DARK CIRCLE!
5

AND WHAT IS THE DARK CIRCLE? A SYMBOL ...A NAME ?...
AN ORGANIZATION, MY FRIEND--A UNION--OF ALL THE BLACK, MYSTIC FORCES THAT COULD THRIVE IN A WORLD SUCH AS THIS!
BUT SOON--THINGS WILL BE DIFFERENT...
SOON OUR GLORIOUS DESTINY WILL BE FULFILLED--AND WE WILL RULE THE WORLD AS IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN RULED--SINCE MANKIND FIRST WALKED ITS WINDING PATHS!
AND YOU, MY FRIEND--THREE TIMES YOU HAVE INTERFERED WITH OUR PLANS--AND OUR LEGIONS ARE THE LESS FOR IT!
BRODERICK RUNE, KAMSET, JOHNNY GLORY, CEREBUS* AGENTS OF THE DARK CIRCLE ALL--
AND ALL OF THEM DEAD BECAUSE OF YOU!
*ED. NOTE: CHECK PHANTOM STRANGER #14, 20 & 21 FOR COMPLETE DETAILS OF THESE ENCOUNTERS.
BUT NO MORE, MY FRIEND--NEVER AGAIN! YOU HAVE INTRUDED IN MATTERS THAT DO NOT CONCERN YOU FOR THE LAST TIME...
NOW WE SHALL SEND YOU ON A JOURNEY FROM WHICH THERE IS NO RE-TURNING..!
AND THE GIRL? WHAT ABOUT CASSANDRA?
YOU NEEDN'T WORRY, MY FRIEND--SHE WILL BE WELL TAKEN CARE OF...!
NOW LET THE RITUAL OF PASSAGE--
BEGIN!!
6

AND THE VICTIM OF THIS ARCANE CHANT WHIRLS SILENTLY ABOVE THE LAPPING FLAMES--HELPLESS TO RELEASE HIMSELF FOR THE GIRL CASSANDRA'S SAKE--TILL IT NO LONGER MATTERS IF HE FREES HIMSELF OR NOT...


DESCRIBE DEATH: IS IT AN ETERNAL PLUNGE THROUGH CASCADING CURRENTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS INTO AN ENDLESS ABYSS?
...OR IS IT THE RAGING CHILL THAT FLOODS YOUR MIND WHEN YOU REALIZE WHAT HAS BEFALLEN YOU?
MY JOURNEY IS ENDED! WHATEVER HELL THIS IS THAT DORIAN AND HIS MINIONS HAVE CHOSEN FOR ME--
I HAVE ARRIVED!
TOO BAD YOUR STAY HERE WILL BE SUCH A SHORT ONE--!
WHO..?
CASSANDRA?! THOSE FILTHY--! THEY'VE SENT YOU TO THIS LIMBO-LAND AS WELL--
--TO SHARE WHATEVER FATE AWAITS ME!
NO, MY FRIEND.. SHE'S NOT THERE TO SHARE YOUR FATE.. WE SENT HER ALONG TO CAUSE IT!
DORIAN-- WHY? WHY USE THE GIRL?
IRONIC, ISN'T IT-- THAT THE ONE PERSON ON EARTH YOU CARE FOR SHOULD BE THE INSTRUMENT OF YOUR DEATH..?
UNLESS OF COURSE-- YOU KILL HER FIRST!
EITHER WAY-- WE WIN!
8

NO--! SLAY ME IF YOU WISH, DORIAN--BUT SPARE THE GIRL! SHE--
DORIAN--WAIT! DON'T GO--DON'T DENY ME!
WAIT-- WAIT--!!
I'M TIRED OF WAITING, FRIEND! NOW FACE ME--
--AND LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH!
HOW CAN I FIGHT YOU, CASSANDRA--
--WHEN THE SCALES OF BATTLE WEIGH SO HEAVY ON MY SIDE?
WHY? BECAUSE I'M BLIND? DON'T LET THAT BOTHER YOU, FRIEND--
--I DON'T HAVE TO SEE YOU TO KILL YOU!
CASSANDRA-- STOP! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING--!
TO DESTROY ME IS TO DOOM YOURSELF AS WELL!
THAT'S NOT TRUE! DORIAN SAYS YOUR DEATH WILL BE A GOOD THING!
HE SAYS YOU ARE EVIL... AND YOU MUST DIE!
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND, CASSANDRA--? YOU'RE UNDER HIS SPELL!
HE'S TWISTED YOUR MIND--FILLED IT WITH DECEIT-- WITH FANTASIES AND LIES--!
LISTEN TO ME, CASSANDRA-- FOR BOTH OUR SAKES--LISTEN TO ME!
NO--I WON'T--! YOU'RE LYING-- LYING!!
9

CASSANDRA--PLEASE--! HOW CAN I PROVE WHAT I SAY TO YOU?
I WILL NOT FIGHT YOU... I CANNOT FIGHT YOU!
YOU CAN PROVE NOTHING TO ME! YOU'RE WICKED--DORIAN SAID SO--
--AND I HAVE TO KILL YOU--I HAVE TO--!
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, CASSANDRA--MAYBE THERE IS NO OTHER WAY--
--MAYBE YOU DO HAVE TO KILL ME!
YOU MUST DIE--DIE--!!
ALL RIGHT THEN, GIRL--I'LL MAKE IT EASY FOR YOU! IF YOU ARE SO DETERMINED TO SLAY ME, DO IT NOW--!
I'LL MAKE NO MOVE TO STOP YOU!
W-WHAT DO YOU MEAN--?
Y-YOU'RE TRYING TO CONFUSE ME--TRYING TO TRICK ME SOMEHOW...
...BUT IT WON'T WORK--IT WON'T WORK...
I HAVE DORIAN'S WORDS TO PROTECT ME...GOOD WORDS ...TRUTHFUL WORDS...
...YOU MUST BE DESTROYED!!
AARRGHH
10

IT IS DONE-- AS DORIAN COMMANDED...
THE STRANGER IS DEAD... HA HA HA HA HA...
...THE STRANGER IS--DEAD?!?
DEAR GOD.. WHAT HAVE I..DONE? }SOB{ }SOB{
YOU HAVE DONE NOTHING, CASSANDRA-- IT WAS THE DEMON THAT POSSESSED YOU WHO SOUGHT TO SLAY ME--!
BUT THAT DEMON IS GONE NOW-- FLED BACK TO THE PIT WHENCE IT SPRUNG!
M-MY FRIEND..? YOU'RE ALIVE--? I--I DIDN'T KILL YOU--?
NO--I MERELY ALLOWED YOU TO THINK YOU HAD SLAIN ME-- TO BRING YOU TO YOUR SENSES!
NOW TAKE MY HAND! IT IS TIME WE LEFT THIS NIGHTMARE WORLD!
THEN LEAD ON, DEAR STRANGER--
I'D GLADLY FOLLOW YOU-- ANYWHERE!

THERE IS THE SENSATION OF FALLING AGAIN--THE FEELING OF UNENDING DARKNESS --AND THEN...
WE HAVE RETURNED, CASSANDRA--
--OUR PRISON WAS NO MORE THAN THE HEART OF A CRYSTAL GLOBE!
VERY PERCEPTIVE OF YOU, DEAR BOY! A PITY YOU DIDN'T RETURN UNNOTICED, THOUGH--
--FOR NOW, YOU MUST BE ELIMINATED BY FAR MORE COMMON MEANS!
DESTROY THEM BOTH, MY CHILDREN--!
NO..! I OWE THE CLOAKED ONE... A DEBT... I SWORE I WOULD REPAY..!
IT MUST BE... THE HAND OF MORGG... THAT ENDS HIS WORTHLESS LIFE..!
WHAT--? BUT, MORGG, I...!
WELL--ALL RIGHT, MY BOY-- SINCE YOU ARE SO ANXIOUS--!
I GIVE YOU BOTH OF THEM-- TO DISPOSE OF AS YOU LIKE--!
THEN MORGG WILL...CRUSH THEM...LIKE LITTLE BUGS..!
12

GET BEHIND ME, CASSANDRA--I CANNOT DO BATTLE WITH YOUR SAFETY ON MY MIND!
DO BATTLE?! BUT YOU CAN'T FIGHT HIM--THAT MONSTER WILL BREAK YOUR BACK!
THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, GIRL! NOW STAY OUT OF HARM'S WAY...
...I HAVE BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO!
YOU MAKE FUN OF MORGG ...BUT MORGG CAN BEND STEEL PIPES... IN HIS HANDS...
...JUST LIKE MORGG WILL BEND YOU... TILL YOU BREAK...
UUNNFF!
KWAMM
YOU THINK YOU ARE SMART... YOU THINK MORGG IS... SLOW AND STUPID...BUT YOU ARE... WRONG...!
ONE WAY... OR ANOTHER... MORGG WILL HAVE HIS... REVENGE...
...IF MORGG CANNOT LAY HANDS ON YOU...
...HE WILL KILL THE GIRL INSTEAD...
NO--! NOOO--!!
CASSANDRA--!
13

DON'T WORRY, DARLING! MAYBE I CAN'T SEE THAT BRUTE--BUT I CAN HEAR HIM COMING A MILE AWAY--
--AND I'M NOT QUITE AS DEFENSELESS AS I SEEM!
WHA?..
THUD
IF YOU'VE HARMED THAT GIRL, I'LL--!
YOU'LL DO ...NOTHING, LITTLE ONE...
...NOTHING EXCEPT... DIE!!
UNNG-- MY BACK--!
OH NO--! PROTECT YOURSELF, PLEASE--!
IT'S HOPELESS, MY DEAR--MORGG IS AN ETHEREAL FLUKE--TOTALLY IMMUNE TO ANY CHANTS OR SPELLS YOUR COMPANION MIGHT ATTEMPT IN HIS DEFENSE!
IT IS OVER... HELPLESS ONE!.. THE HELLFIRE PIT... WILL CONSUME YOU... IN MOMENTS..!
A BATTLE IS NOT WON WITH WORDS, GIANT...
...BUT WITH ACTIONS!
I WILL NOT BE DEFEATED WITHOUT A GREAT DEAL OF PROTEST!
AARRGH-- THE NECKLACE... CHOKING ME!..
14

FOR AN INSTANT, THE TWO COMBATANTS GRAPPLE FURIOUSLY--THEN, WITH A VIOLENT WRENCH, THE GIANT CALLED MORGG PULLS FREE OF THE CONSTRICTING MEDALLION CHAIN AND...
NO!.. NOOO! IT'S... NOT FAIR... AAAIEEE
I'M AFRAID THAT IS A-- MOOT POINT NOW, GIANT--!
DARLING--? THANK HEAVEN--! I WAS SO AFRAID THAT MONSTER WOULD--!
WE'LL TALK OF IT LATER, CASSANDRA! NOW WE'D BEST MAKE A SWIFT AND STRATEGIC EXIT!
STRANGER-- WAIT--! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE--!
COME BACK-- COME BACK! YOU CANNOT ESCAPE US AGAIN--! OUR MASTER WILL NOT TOLERATE FAILURE!
IF WE DO NOT KILL YOU... WE PERISH IN YOUR PLACE--!
COME BACK-- YOU CANNOT LEAVE US LIKE THIS--! YOU--!
KWA-ROOOM
T-THAT EXPLOSION--! W-WHAT'S HAPPENING TO--?
IT IS FINISHED, CASSANDRA! DORIAN AND HIS MINIONS HAVE PAID THE PRICE OF THEIR FAILURE!
AND YOU? WHAT ABOUT YOU?
15

I WILL GO ON-- AS I ALWAYS HAVE! THERE IS EVIL AFOOT ON THE LAND--AND I CANNOT REST TILL THE DARK CIRCLE IS BROKEN!
GOOD-BYE CASSANDRA-- I WILL COME BACK TO YOU SOMEDAY-- IF I CAN!
NO--WAIT! YOU CAN'T CONTINUE LIKE THIS-- ALWAYS LEAVING-- ALWAYS ALONE--!
THERE COMES A TIME WHEN YOU HAVE TO STOP-- AND ACCEPT THE AID OF OTHERS!
BLAST YOU-- COME BACK HERE! YOU CAN'T TAKE ON THE ENTIRE WORLD BY YOURSELF!
PLEASE-- LET ME HELP YOU!
OH, THANK GOD! YOU WON'T REGRET THIS! I PROMISE YOU WON'T!
I COULDN'T GO, CASSANDRA--AND LEAVE YOU IN POSSIBLE DANGER ONCE MORE!
UNTIL THIS SICKNESS IS WIPED FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH, YOU WILL STAY BY MY SIDE--
--AND WE SHALL FACE THE DARK CIRCLE---- TOGETHER!
ONLY THE BEGINNING...
16

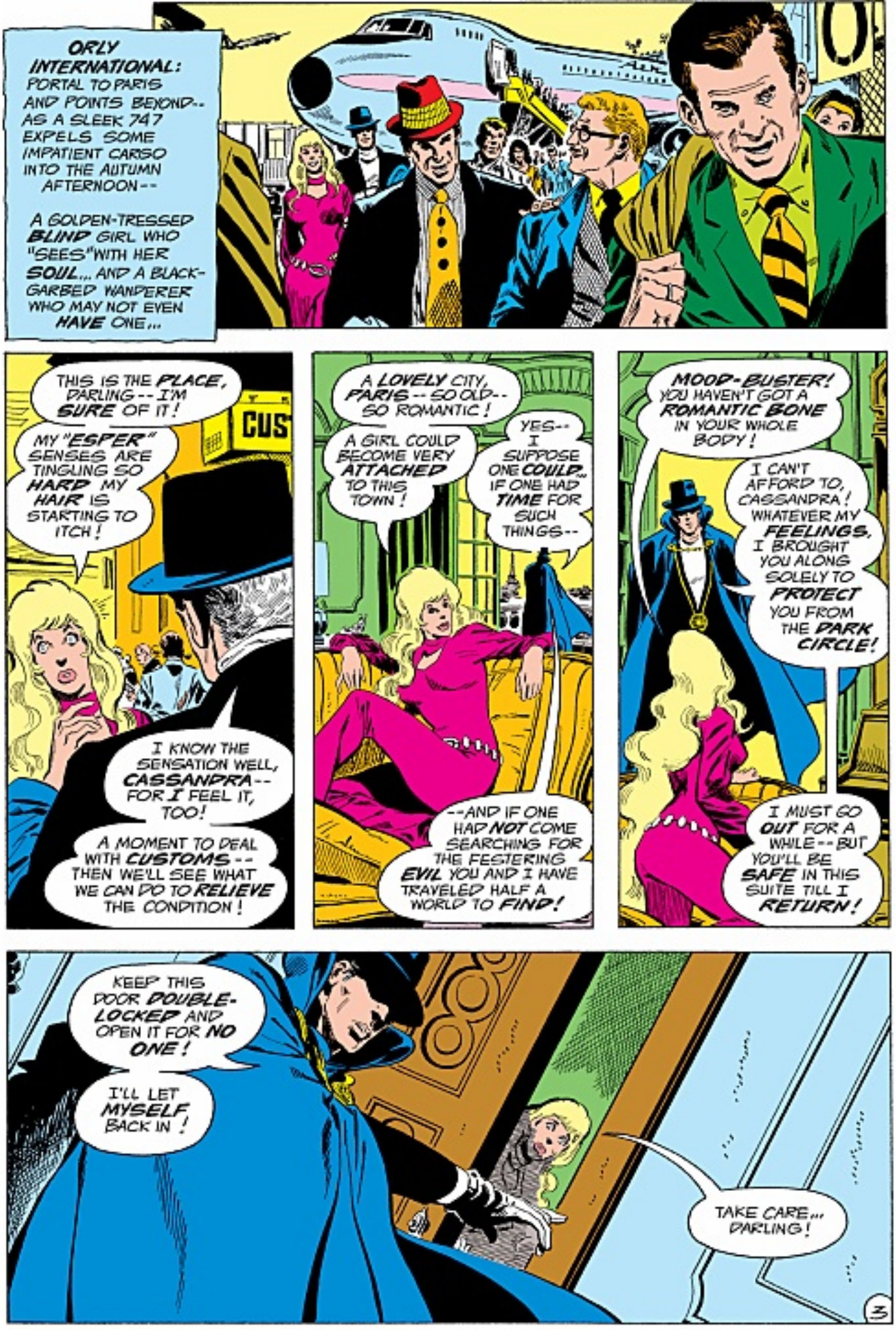
Cover for **THE PHANTOM STRANGER #23** (1972)
Art by Jim Aparo

PARIS-- CITY OF A MILLION LIGHTS -- HAS SURVIVED SEVENTEEN CENTURIES OF REVOLUTION AND RENAISSANCE! FROM THE BITTER RUINS OF BATTLE, ITS PEOPLE HAVE BUILT MONUMENTS-- TO ALL THAT IS RARE AND BEAUTIFUL!
IF YOU WISH, YOU MAY CALL ME THE PHANTOM STRANGER-- AND I HAVE COME TO SHOW YOU THE OTHER SIDE OF BEAUTY...
...THE GREAT, GRAY, GRINNING FACE OF-- HELL!
La Cafe

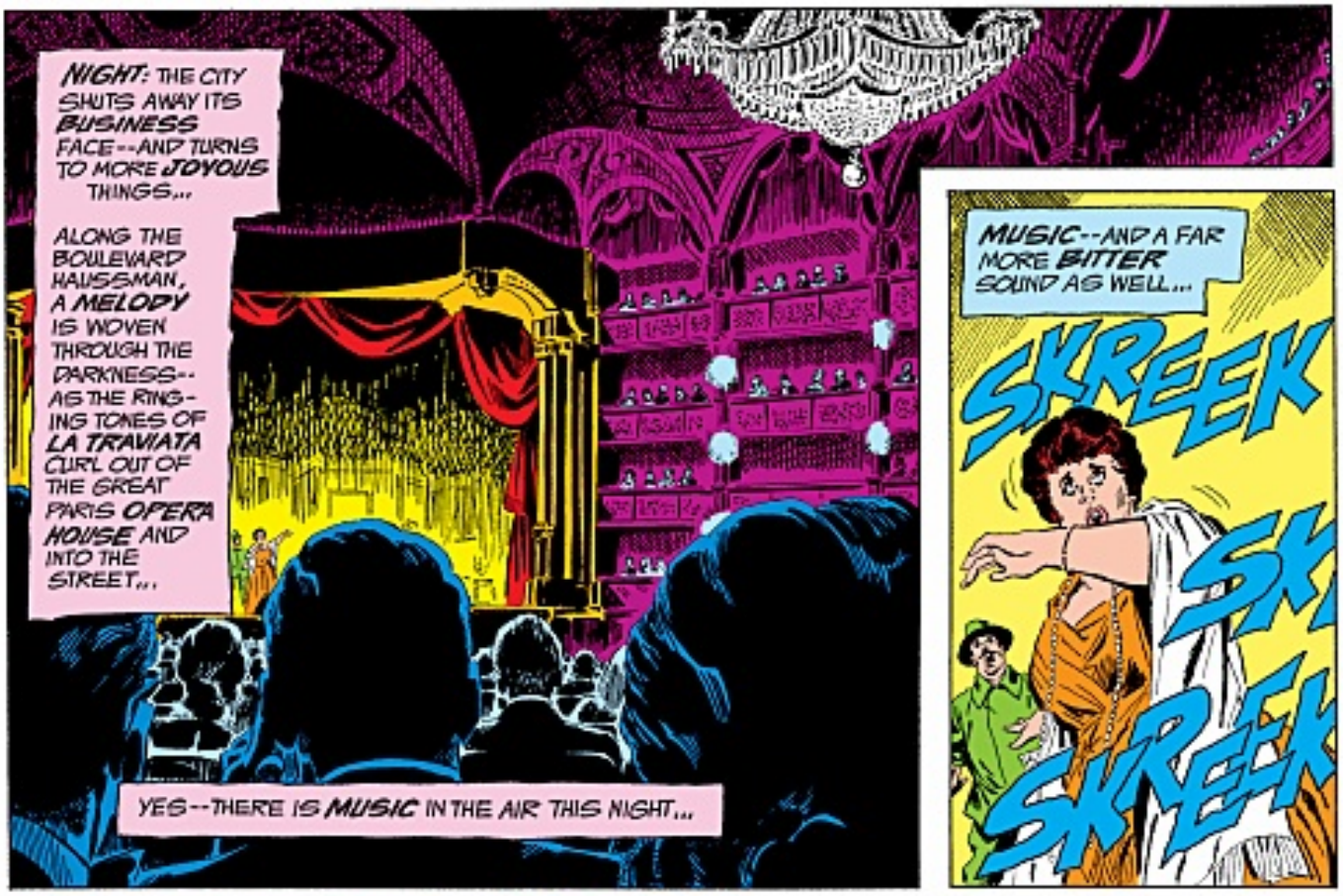
THE CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE DAME-- CAUGHT IN THE SHADOWS OF NIGHT. SINCE THE YEAR 1240, MEN HAVE ENTERED THESE HALLOWED CHAMBERS SEEKING WISDOM AND SALVATION...
BUT TONIGHT, THOSE WHO WALK ITS VELVET HALLS SEARCH FOR-- SOMETHING ELSE...
DO YOU SEE HIM, RENE?
NO, JACQUES -- BUT HE IS HERE SOMEWHERE! I CAN FEEL IT IN MY BONES!
A PROWLER-- IN THE CATHEDRAL YET! SUCH SACRILEGE!
WE'D BEST SPLIT UP--AND SCOUR THE PREMISES FROM TOWER TO FLOOR!
THE SCOUNDREL WILL NOT ESCAPE US!

SILENCE: THE MUSTY AIR HANGS HEAVY WITH IT AS THE SEARCH WINDS THROUGH THE ANCIENT CHAPEL-GROUND...
SILENCE: THAT DIES WITH THE TOLLING OF...
BONG
BONG
BONG
--THE TOWER BELLS! SOUNDING AT SUCH A LATE HOUR?
SOMETHING IS-- WRONG!

SWIFTLY AS HIS STUBBY LEGS CAN CARRY HIM, THE MAN CALLED JACQUES RACES UP THE TOWER STAIRS TO FIND...
WHO--WHO IS HERE? WHO RINGS THE HOLY BELLS AT SUCH AN UNHOLY HOUR?
WHO--?
BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG
OH...MON... DIEU..!
HA HA HA HA
RENE!
FOR A MOMENT, THE STUNNED GUARD STRUGGLES TO CATCH HIS BREATH--THEN THE SOUND OF MANIACAL LAUGHTER DRIFTS DOWN FROM THE DARKNESS--
--AND TWO EYES GO WIDE--WITH A SPECIAL KIND OF HORROR...
HA HA HA HA HA HA
BONG
NO--IT CAN'T BE--! QUASIMODO RINGS THE BELLS!
QUASIMODO--THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME!!
PANIC IN THE NIGHT!
2


ORLY INTERNATIONAL: PORTAL TO PARIS AND POINTS BEYOND-- AS A SLEEK 747 EXPELS SOME IMPATIENT CARSO INTO THE AUTUMN AFTERNOON--
A GOLDEN-TRESSED BLIND GIRL WHO "SEES" WITH HER SOUL... AND A BLACK-GARBED WANDERER WHO MAY NOT EVEN HAVE ONE...
THIS IS THE PLACE, DARLING -- I'M SURE OF IT!
MY "ESPER" SENSES ARE TINGLING SO HARD MY HAIR IS STARTING TO ITCH!
CUS
I KNOW THE SENSATION WELL, CASSANDRA -- FOR I FEEL IT, TOO!
A MOMENT TO DEAL WITH CUSTOMS -- THEN WE'LL SEE WHAT WE CAN DO TO RELIEVE THE CONDITION!
A LOVELY CITY, PARIS -- SO OLD -- SO ROMANTIC!
A GIRL COULD BECOME VERY ATTACHED TO THIS TOWN!
YES -- I SUPPOSE ONE COULD... IF ONE HAD TIME FOR SUCH THINGS --
--AND IF ONE HAD NOT COME SEARCHING FOR THE FESTERING EVIL YOU AND I HAVE TRAVELED HALF A WORLD TO FIND!
MOOD-BUSTER! YOU HAVEN'T GOT A ROMANTIC BONE IN YOUR WHOLE BODY!
I CAN'T AFFORD TO, CASSANDRA! WHATEVER MY FEELINGS, I BROUGHT YOU ALONG SOLELY TO PROTECT YOU FROM THE DARK CIRCLE!
I MUST GO OUT FOR A WHILE -- BUT YOU'LL BE SAFE IN THIS SUITE TILL I RETURN!
KEEP THIS DOOR DOUBLE-LOCKED AND OPEN IT FOR NO ONE!
I'LL LET MYSELF BACK IN!
TAKE CARE... DARLING!
3

DUSK SPILLS CARELESSLY OVER THE WINDING BACK STREETS OF THE CITY, SPREADING SHADOWS AS IT COMES...
--AND IN ONE CLUTTERED OLD SHOP...
WORK, YOU CONFOUNDED CONTRAPTION--WHY WON'T YOU WORK?
THE YEARS HAVE NOT CHANGED YOU, MARCEL!
WHO--? WHY--MY OLD FRIEND..!
HOW GOOD IT IS TO SEE YOU AGAIN--AFTER SUCH A LONG TIME!
TIME PLACES NO LIMITATION ON FRIEND-SHIP, MARCEL--
--BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, MY VISIT IS NOT SOCIAL!
HAS IT EVER BEEN? THE YEARS HAVE NOT AFFECTED YOU A GREAT DEAL EITHER, MY FRIEND!
STILL... HOW CAN MARCEL SERVE?
I SEEK INFORMATION...
AND THERE IS LITTLE IN PARIS THAT ESCAPES YOUR NOTICE!
TELL ME, MARCEL--
WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF AN ORGANIZATION THAT CALLS ITSELF--
THE DARK CIRCLE!
I AM SORRY, MY FRIEND--BUT THE NAME MEANS NOTHING TO ME!
IF THIS--DARK CIRCLE--IS IN LA BELLE FRANCE, IT HAS NOT REVEALED ITSELF!
SO I FEARED! THEN I MUST WAIT UNTIL IT DOES!
IF YOU HEAR OF ANYTHING, MARCEL--CONTACT ME!
CERTAINLY, MY FRIEND--IT'S SMALL ENOUGH PAYMENT OF MY DEBT TO YOU!
BUT NOW, I'M AFRAID, I MUST RETURN TO MY WORK--REPAIRING A CONFOUNDED CLOCK THAT...
SACRE BLEU! THE CLOCK--IT IS WORKING PERFECTLY!
TICK TICK TICK TICK
MERCI, MY FRIEND... THIS IS ONE MORE, I OWE!
4


NIGHT: THE CITY SHUTS AWAY ITS BUSINESS FACE--AND TURNS TO MORE JOYOUS THINGS...
ALONG THE BOULEVARD HAUSSMAN, A MELODY IS WOVEN THROUGH THE DARKNESS--AS THE RINGING TONES OF LA TRAVIATA CURL OUT OF THE GREAT PARIS OPERA HOUSE AND INTO THE STREET...
YES--THERE IS MUSIC IN THE AIR THIS NIGHT...

MUSIC--AND A FAR MORE BITTER SOUND AS WELL...
SKREEK
SKREEK

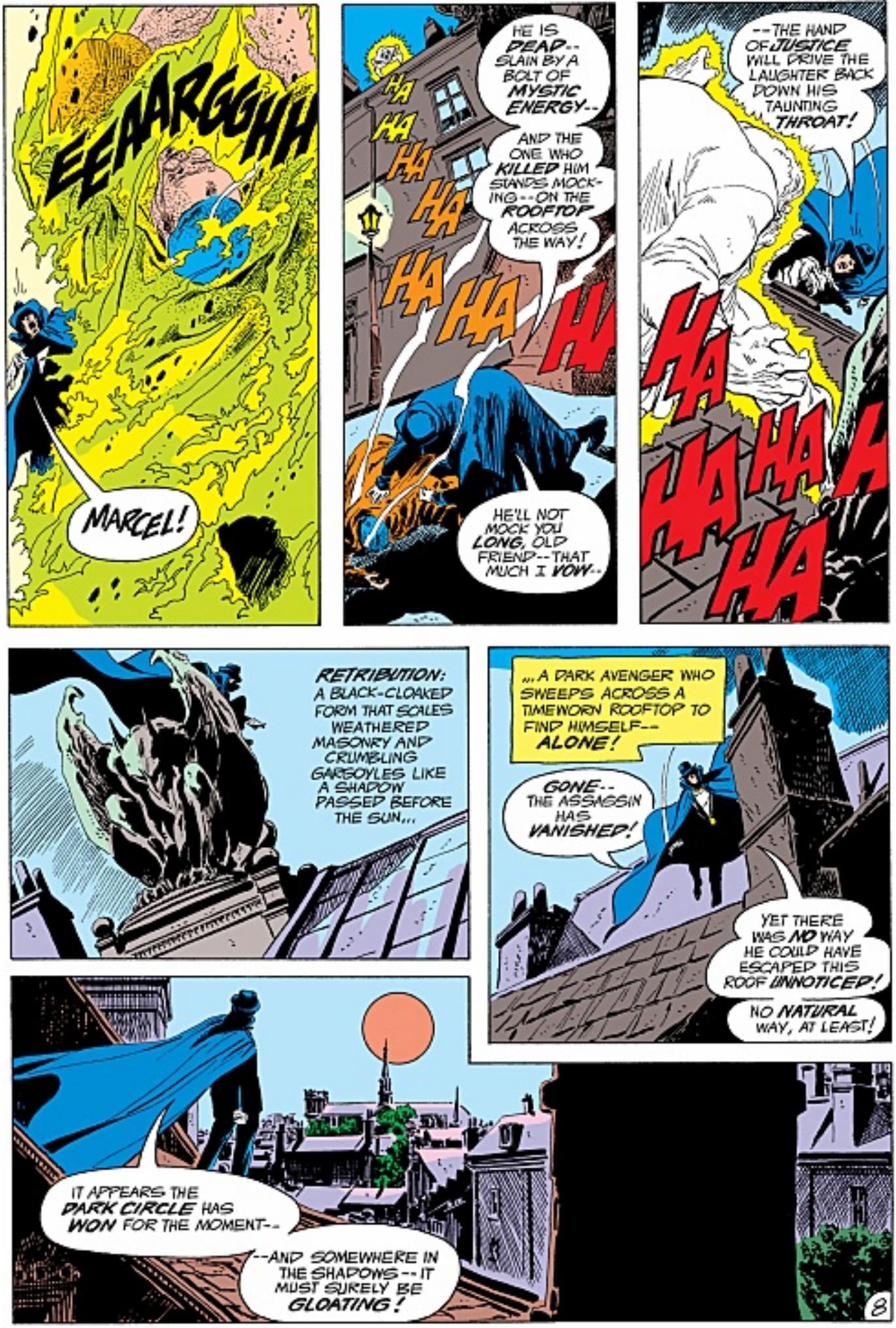
AAEEEE
SACRE BLEU! THE PHANTOM HAS RETURNED--
--SAWING THROUGH THE CHANDELIER CHAIN--!
HE WILL DESTROY US ALL!

SUDDENLY, A BLACK-CLOAKED SHADOW BILLOWS ACROSS THE SCENE...
MON DIEU--ANOTHER MADMAN--COME TO FINISH THE WORK OF THE FIRST!
NOW WE ARE SURELY DOOMED!

FEATHER-LIGHT, THE SILENT STRANGER STRADDLES THE TREMBLING CRYSTAL...
FOR A MOMENT, HE PAUSES--HIS DARK EYES SWIFTLY ASSESSING THE SITUATION...
5

...AND THEN, HE ACTS!
EEEEEEE
RUN! RUN FOR YOUR LIVES--
--BEFORE THAT MANIAC BRINGS THE CEILING DOWN UPON US!
DARLING? DARLING--ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND HERE?
SNAP
CASSANDRA--PLEASE! SIT DOWN--AND STAY WHERE YOU ARE!
THIS CHAIN IS GOING TO...
THERE IS A SCREAM OF CRYSTAL AS THE ANCIENT CHANDELIER HURTLES THROUGH SPACE...
...A SCREAM MADE SHRILLER BY THE TERRIFIED SHRIEKS OF THE PANICKING THRONG...
KARASH
...A SCREAM THAT DIES IN THUNDER!
6

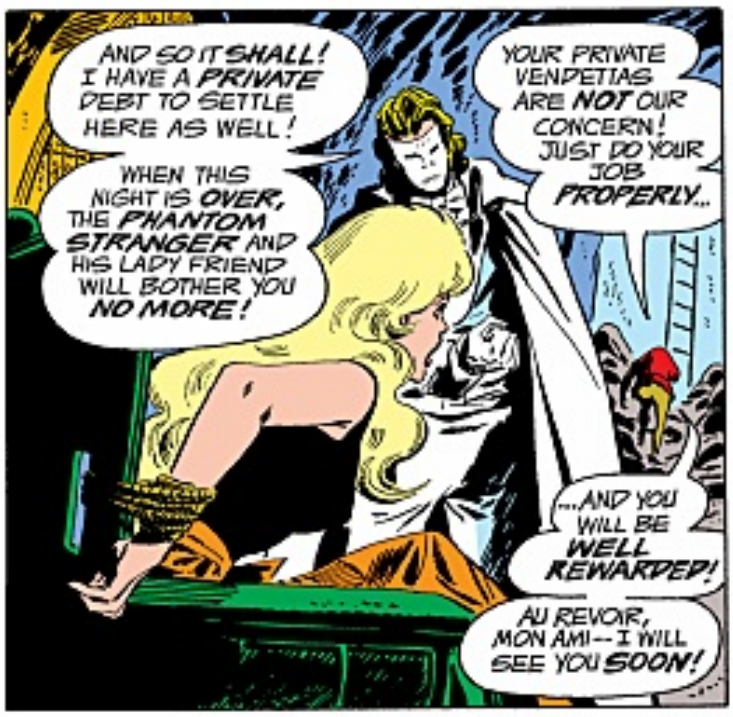
WHEN THE DUST HAS SETTLED...
QUICKLY-- HE MAY STILL BE ALIVE UNDER ALL THIS! HELP ME SEARCH FOR HIM BEFORE...
I'M AFRAID YOU WASTE YOUR TIME, MON AMI-- I HAVE ALREADY EXAMINED THIS RUBBLE--
--AND THE MAN IN BLACK IS-- GONE!
NO--NOT GONE...
...MERELY RELOCATED...
CASSANDRA-- ARE YOU--?
EMPTY?! OF ALL THE FOOLISH--! WHILE I DEALT WITH THE CHANDELIER...
...MY ENEMIES HAVE-- TAKEN HER!
IT IS AN ANGRY WANDERER WHO LEAVES THE CONFUSION OF THE OPERA BEHIND HIM--
CONDEMNING HIMSELF FOR FAILING TO PROTECT THE ONE BEING WHO IS DEAR TO HIM--
THE GIRL-- CASSANDRA CRAFT!
MY FRIEND--! PSSST-- MY FRIEND--
I HAVE WHAT YOU SEEK!
WHO--?
MARCEL! FORGIVE ME-- I WAS LOST IN THOUGHT!
WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED, MY FRIEND?
IT IS AS YOU EXPECTED!
THIS... DARK CIRCLE YOU SEARCH FOR... HAS INDEED REACHED PARIS!
SO I'VE SINCE DISCOVERED! BUT WHAT IS THEIR PURPOSE HERE, MARCEL?
DO YOU KNOW WHY THEY HAVE COME?
POSSIBLY, MY FRIEND... HAVE YOU EVER HEARD MENTION OF-- THE PILLAR OF SOULS?
IT'S A SCULPTURE FABLED TO HAVE POWERS OF...
7


EEAARGGHH
MARCEL!
HA HA HA HA HA
HE IS DEAD-- SLAIN BY A BOLT OF MYSTIC ENERGY--
AND THE ONE WHO KILLED HIM STANDS MOCKING--ON THE ROOFTOP ACROSS THE WAY!
HE'LL NOT MOCK YOU LONG, OLD FRIEND--THAT MUCH I VOW..
--THE HAND OF JUSTICE WILL DRIVE THE LAUGHTER BACK DOWN HIS TAUNTING THROAT!
HA HA HA HA
RETRIBUTION: A BLACK-CLOAKED FORM THAT SCALES WEATHERED MASONRY AND CRUMBLING GARGOYLES LIKE A SHADOW PASSED BEFORE THE SUN...
...A DARK AVENGER WHO SWEEPS ACROSS A TIMEWORN ROOFTOP TO FIND HIMSELF-- ALONE!
GONE-- THE ASSASSIN HAS VANISHED!
YET THERE WAS NO WAY HE COULD HAVE ESCAPED THIS ROOF UNNOTICED!
NO NATURAL WAY, AT LEAST!
IT APPEARS THE DARK CIRCLE HAS WON FOR THE MOMENT--
--AND SOMEWHERE IN THE SHADOWS--IT MUST SURELY BE GLOATING!
8

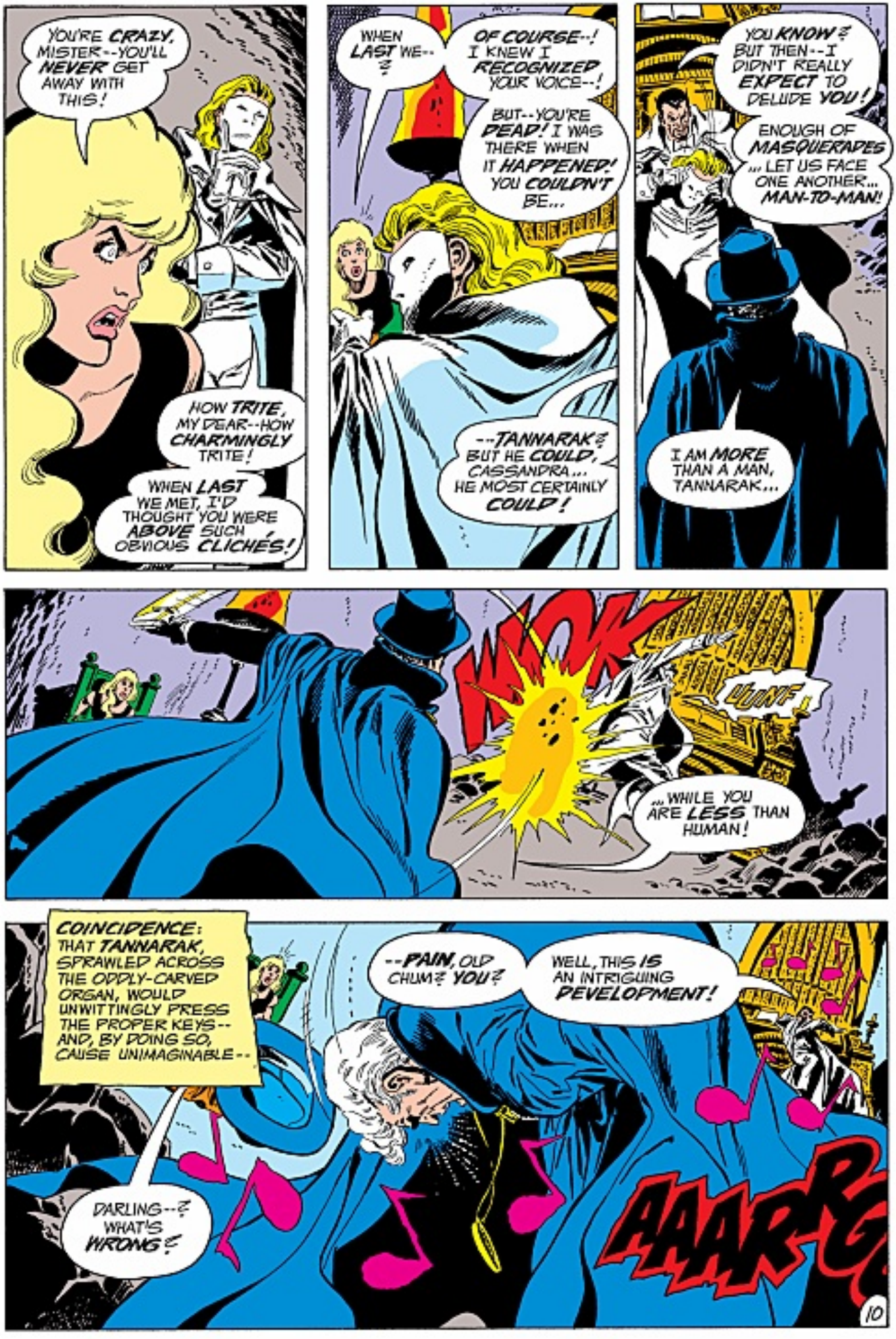
THE SEWERS OF PARIS ARE LIKE THOSE OF ANY OTHER CITY-- FILLED WITH RATS-- REFUSE--
AND, ON THIS NIGHT, THE MACABRE STRAINS OF-- ORGAN MUSIC...
WELL, MONSIEUR-- BACK AT LAST! I WAS BEGINNING TO HAVE MY DOUBTS ABOUT YOU!
WERE THERE ANY PROBLEMS?
NONE I COULD NOT DEAL WITH, MON AMI!

OUR CAMPAIGN OF SYSTEMATIC TERRORISM HAS HAD THE DESIRED EFFECT--
THE PARISIANS ARE SO PETRIFIED OF "GHOSTS" THAT THE STREETS WILL BE WELL EMPTY-- WHEN WE STEAL THE "PILLAR OF SOULS"!
YOU WILL, OF COURSE, BE WITNESS TO THE EVENT! CALL IT A BONUS OF SORTS!

THANK YOU, MONSIEUR-- BUT I OWE YOU SO MUCH ALREADY!
I WOULD NOT EVEN BE HERE WERE IT NOT FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION'S PECULIAR... TALENTS!
YOU OWE US NOTHING... BUT UNDYING LOYALTY, MON AMI!
WE ASK ONLY THAT YOUR PART OF THE MASTER PLAN BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT ERROR!


AND SO IT SHALL! I HAVE A PRIVATE DEBT TO SETTLE HERE AS WELL!
WHEN THIS NIGHT IS OVER, THE PHANTOM STRANGER AND HIS LADY FRIEND WILL BOTHER YOU NO MORE!
YOUR PRIVATE VENDETTAS ARE NOT OUR CONCERN! JUST DO YOUR JOB PROPERLY...
...AND YOU WILL BE WELL REWARDED!
AU REVOIR, MON AMI-- I WILL SEE YOU SOON!

WELL REWARDED-- INDEED! WHEN I'VE GAINED THE PRIZE THEY'VE PROMISED ME, MY LOYALTY WILL BE TRULY... UNDYING!
9


YOU'RE CRAZY, MISTER--YOU'LL NEVER GET AWAY WITH THIS!
HOW TRITE, MY DEAR--HOW CHARMINGLY TRITE!
WHEN LAST WE MET, I'D THOUGHT YOU WERE ABOVE SUCH OBVIOUS CLICHÉS!
WHEN LAST WE--?
OF COURSE--! I KNEW I RECOGNIZED YOUR VOICE--!
BUT--YOU'RE DEAD! I WAS THERE WHEN IT HAPPENED! YOU COULDN'T BE...
--TANNARAK? BUT HE COULD, CASSANDRA... HE MOST CERTAINLY COULD!
YOU KNOW? BUT THEN--I DIDN'T REALLY EXPECT TO DELUDE YOU!
ENOUGH OF MASQUERADES ... LET US FACE ONE ANOTHER... MAN-TO-MAN!
I AM MORE THAN A MAN, TANNARAK...
KRONK
UUNF
...WHILE YOU ARE LESS THAN HUMAN!
COINCIDENCE: THAT TANNARAK, SPRAWLED ACROSS THE ODDLY-CARVED ORGAN, WOULD UNWITTINGLY PRESS THE PROPER KEYS--AND, BY DOING SO, CAUSE UNIMAGINABLE--
--PAIN, OLD CHUM? YOU?
WELL, THIS IS AN INTRIGUING DEVELOPMENT!
DARLING--? WHAT'S WRONG?
AAARG
10

"DARLING" NOW, IS IT? HOW UNBEARABLY DOMESTIC! WELL-- NO MATTER!
MUSIC, 'TIS SAID, HATH CHARMS TO SOOTHE THE SAVAGE BREAST! I WONDER IF MY MUSIC MIGHT NOT STILL A CERTAIN BREAST--PERMANENTLY!
HNGH

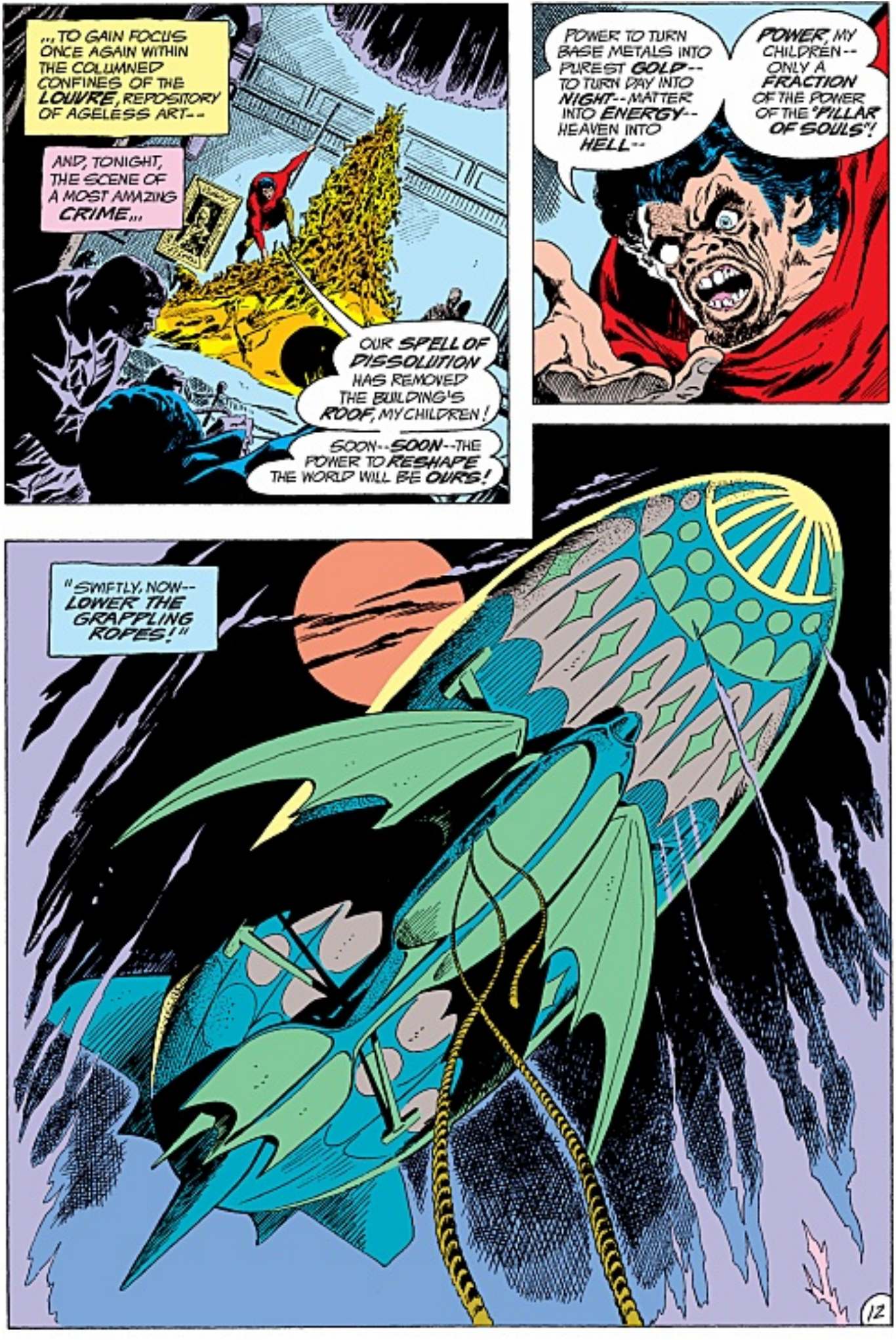
TANNARAK--PLEASE-- I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU WANT--IF YOU'LL ONLY STOP PLAYING!
DEAR GOD... YOU'RE KILLING HIM!
NO, CASSANDRA... HE IS... KILLING... HIMSELF!

OH? AND HOW, PRAY TELL, DO YOU FIGURE THAT?
ONCE... YOU'VE SLAIN... ME... THE DARK... CIRCLE WILL... HAVE NO FURTHER... NEED OF YOU!.. YOU'LL BE... EXPENDABLE!
YOU'VE BEEN PROMISED... IMMORTALITY... BUT ALL YOU WILL WIN... IS A SHROUD!

PREPOSTEROUS! THEY HAVE NO REASON TO TURN ON ME--!
DON'T... THEY? YOU'RE NOT A... FOLLOWER, TANNARAK!.. YOU COULD... NOT REMAIN... SUBSERVIENT ... FOR LONG!
THE CIRCLE... DOES NOT WANT... COMPETITION!

BUT THEY WOULDN'T KILL ME... THEY WOULDN'T!
WOULDN'T THEY?.. THINK ABOUT IT, TANNARAK...
... THINK ABOUT IT!!

NO! I WON'T LISTEN! JUST ONE MORE NOTE-- AND EVERYTHING I'VE EVER DREAMED OF WILL BE MINE!
I HAVE TO KILL YOU...
NOW!!
A WHITE-GLOVED HAND STABS DOWNWARD--AND THE SCENE DISSOLVES TO BLACK...


...TO GAIN FOCUS ONCE AGAIN WITHIN THE COLUMNED CONFINES OF THE LOUVRE, REPOSITORY OF AGELESS ART--
AND, TONIGHT, THE SCENE OF A MOST AMAZING CRIME...
OUR SPELL OF DISSOLUTION HAS REMOVED THE BUILDING'S ROOF, MY CHILDREN!
SOON--SOON--THE POWER TO RESHAPE THE WORLD WILL BE OURS!
POWER TO TURN BASE METALS INTO PUREST GOLD-- TO TURN DAY INTO NIGHT--MATTER INTO ENERGY-- HEAVEN INTO HELL--
POWER, MY CHILDREN-- ONLY A FRACTION OF THE POWER OF THE "PILLAR OF SOULS"!
"SWIFTLY, NOW-- LOWER THE GRAPPLING ROPES!"
12

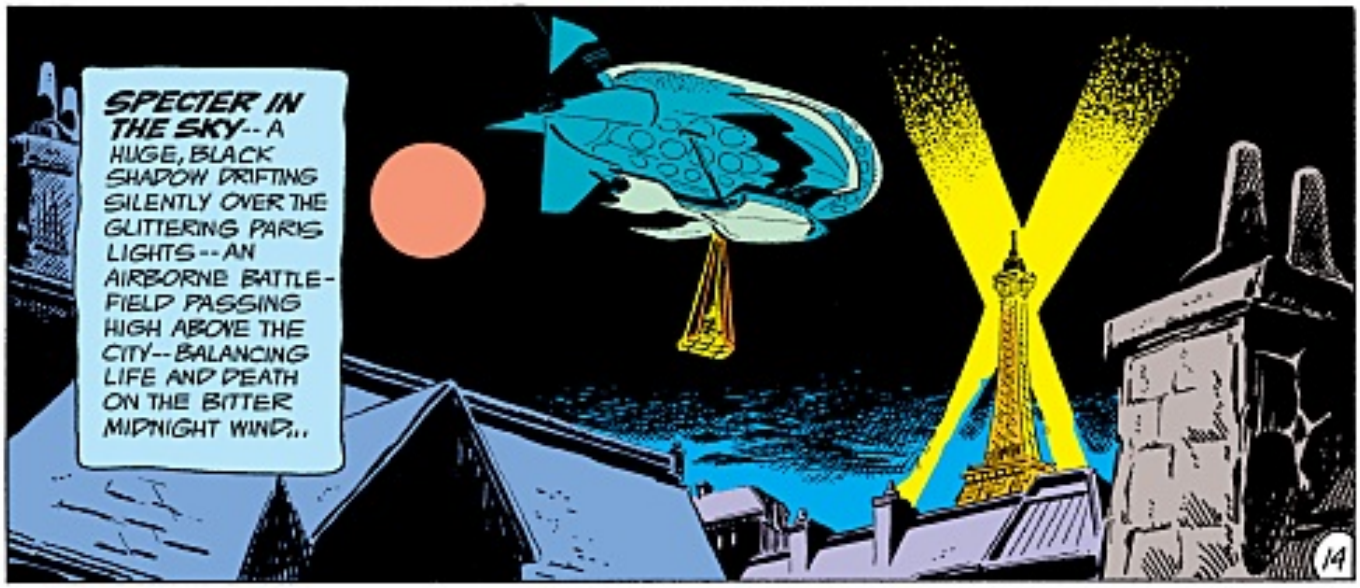
I SEE YOU'RE STILL "GRAPPLING" WITH THE SITUATION, MY FRIEND!
WHO--?
TANNARAK? THEN YOUR ASSIGNMENT..?
A TOTAL SUCCESS! THAT RATHER UNUSUAL ORGAN OF YOURS PLAYED A DEATH DIRGE FOR THE STRANGER AND THE GIRL!
SKASH!
EXCELLENT, MON AMI-- EXCELLENT!
WHAT A SHAME THERE WILL BE NO ONE TO PLAY SUCH SONGS FOR YOU!
DONE! ANOTHER BURR IS REMOVED FROM OUR SIDE! GREATER GLORY TO...
--THE DARK CIRCLE? YOU HAVE SEEN ITS KIND OF "HONOR" WITH YOUR OWN EYES!
DO YOU BELIEVE MY WARNING NOW?
WHATEVER MY OTHER FAULTS, OLD CHUM--NO MAN CAN CALL ME STUPID!
TANNARAK!? THE STRANGER!? YOU BOTH LIVE!!
BUT HOW--?
13

YOU SLEW A STATUE, VILLAIN-- DRESSED IN TANNARAK'S GARB!
JUST CALL IT CAUTION, MON AMI--THAT AND THE KNOWLEDGE THAT I WOULD DO THE SAME THING IF I WERE IN YOUR PLACE!
STOP THEM, YOU FOOLS! DON'T LET THEM NEAR ME!

MASTER, THE LINES ARE ALL IN PLACE!
WHAT ARE YOUR ORDERS NOW?
MY ORDERS? GET US OUT OF HERE, YOU IDIOT--
--THE STATUE MUST NOT FALL INTO THEIR HANDS!

NOR MAY IT FALL INTO YOURS, EVIL ONE--
AND WE WILL FOLLOW YOU TO THE VERY GATES OF HELL IF WE MUST--TO MAKE CERTAIN IT DOES NOT!
SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, OLD PAL!

HAND OVER HAND, THE TWO CLOAKED FIGURES SWIFTLY SCALE THE GRAPPLING ROPES AND...
THEY'VE REACHED THE SHIP!
DO SOMETHING, YOU MINDLESS MISANTHROPES-- STOP THEM!!
IT WILL TAKE FAR MORE THAN YOUR LACKEYS--TO STOP THE TIDE OF JUSTICE!


SPECTER IN THE SKY-- A HUGE, BLACK SHADOW DRIFTING SILENTLY OVER THE GLITTERING PARIS LIGHTS--AN AIRBORNE BATTLE-FIELD PASSING HIGH ABOVE THE CITY--BALANCING LIFE AND DEATH ON THE BITTER MIDNIGHT WIND...
14

YOUR DARK CIRCLE IS BROKEN, MY FRIEND--NOTHING STANDS BETWEEN US NOW!
NO--DON'T HURT ME--! I--I'LL GIVE YOU THE IMMORTALITY YOU SEEK, I SWEAR IT--!
PLEASE.. I'LL GIVE YOU ANY-THING--ANYTHING--!
ALL YOU CAN GIVE ME NOW, LIAR, IS--SATISFACTION!
WHA--? MY STAFF--! I...
OH--NOOOOOOOO
HE'S GOING OVER THE EDGE--! BUT--THE STATUE IS BELOW!
HELP ME, MON AMI--I AM LOSING MY GRIP--! PLEASE--HELP ME--!
HELP, MY FRIEND? OF COURSE--THE SAME SORT OF HELP YOU'D GIVE ME!
PLEASE...
SSKASHHH
NOOOOOOOO
KWA RAM
15

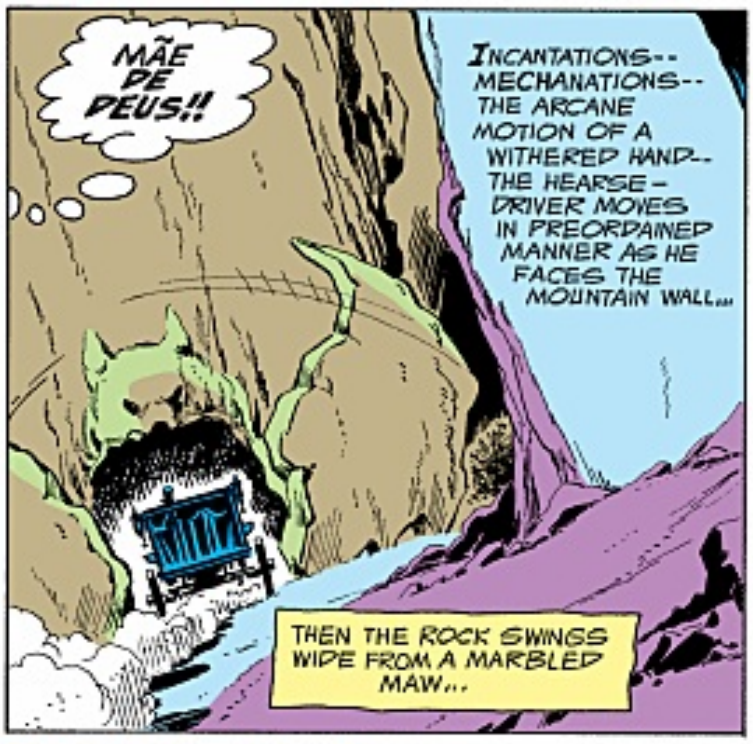
AND WHEN THE ECHOES OF IMPACT AT LAST FADE AWAY...
THE LEADER-- AND THE STATUE-- BOTH GONE!
WHY, TANNARAK? THERE MUST HAVE BEEN ANOTHER WAY!
I MERELY GAVE HIM WHAT HE WANTED, OLD CHUM-- THE "PILLAR OF SOULS" DID FALL INTO HIS HANDS!
I'M AFRAID I GOT CARRIED AWAY!
SO SHALL WE BOTH-- UNLESS WE VACATE THIS BIZARRE VEHICLE-- IMMEDIATELY!
JUMP FOR THE TOWER, TANNARAK-- NOW!!
RIGHT BEHIND YOU, OLD SPORT--
--BUT THERE'S STILL SOMETHING I MUST DO!
THERE! THAT THING WAS A MENACE TO AIR TRAFFIC!
WELL DONE, TANNARAK! THE WIND WILL CARRY THE SHIP OUT OVER THE OCEAN-- WHERE IT CAN PERISH IN PEACE!
WE'D BEST START CLIMBING! IT'S A LONG WAY DOWN!
AND SOON...
CASSANDRA! HOW DID YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOCATE US?
US? THEN THE TWO OF YOU ARE SAFE? THANK HEAVENS!
MY ESP TOLD ME I'D FIND YOU HERE BEFORE THE NIGHT WAS OUT!
SUCH POWERS MUST BE USEFUL, MY DEAR!
ALMOST AS USEFUL AS YOU HAVE BEEN THIS EVENING, TANNARAK!
THE COILS OF THE DARK CIRCLE ARE EVERYWHERE, TANNARAK--COLD-- MALIGNANT! WILL YOU JOIN YOUR HAND WITH OURS TO COMBAT THEM?
Y-YOU'RE ASKING ME TO JOIN YOU--?
WELL, WHY NOT? I HAVE MY OWN SCORE TO SETTLE WITH THOSE WOULD-BE CONQUERORS!
THEN WE WILL SETTLE ALL SCORES-- TOGETHER!
STORY LEN WEIN
ART JIM APARO
EDITOR JOE ORLANDO
NOT THE END!
16

Cover for **THE PHANTOM STRANGER #24** (1973)
Art by Jim Aparo

THEY CALL THE STATUE CHRISTO REDENTOR-- AND IT STANDS ATOP THE MOUNTAIN LIKE A GREAT TRUTH, ARMS OUT-STRETCHED IN SILENT BENEDICTION, AS IF TO SANCTIFY THE MERRIMENT IN THE CITY FAR BELOW!
WITNESS RIO DE JANEIRO AT CARNIVAL TIME--ALIVE WITH COSTUMED CLOWNS AND COURTESANS, VAGABONDS AND KINGS--AND, LURKING HERE AND THERE IN THE SHADOWS, THE SUGAR-CANDY COUNTENANCE OF--DEATH!
I AM CALLED THE PHANTOM STRANGER--AND THERE ARE SOME WHO'D THINK ME OUT OF PLACE AT SUCH FESTIVITIES...
WE SHALL SEE IF THEY ARE RIGHT!
THE FESTIVE PROCESSION WRITHES THROUGH THE BANNER-STREWN STREETS--GAINING NEW FACES, DISCARDING THE OLD...
...SO THREE GAUDY PRETENDERS GO ALL BUT UNNOTICED--AS THEY FADE INTO DARKNESS...
...TO REAPPEAR BRIEF MOMENTS LATER AT THE FUN-LIT CITY'S EDGE...
BRASS-RIMMED WHEELS SETTLE INTO EARTH WITH THE ADDED WEIGHT-- THEN ROLL QUIETLY AWAY UP THE MOUNTAINSIDE...

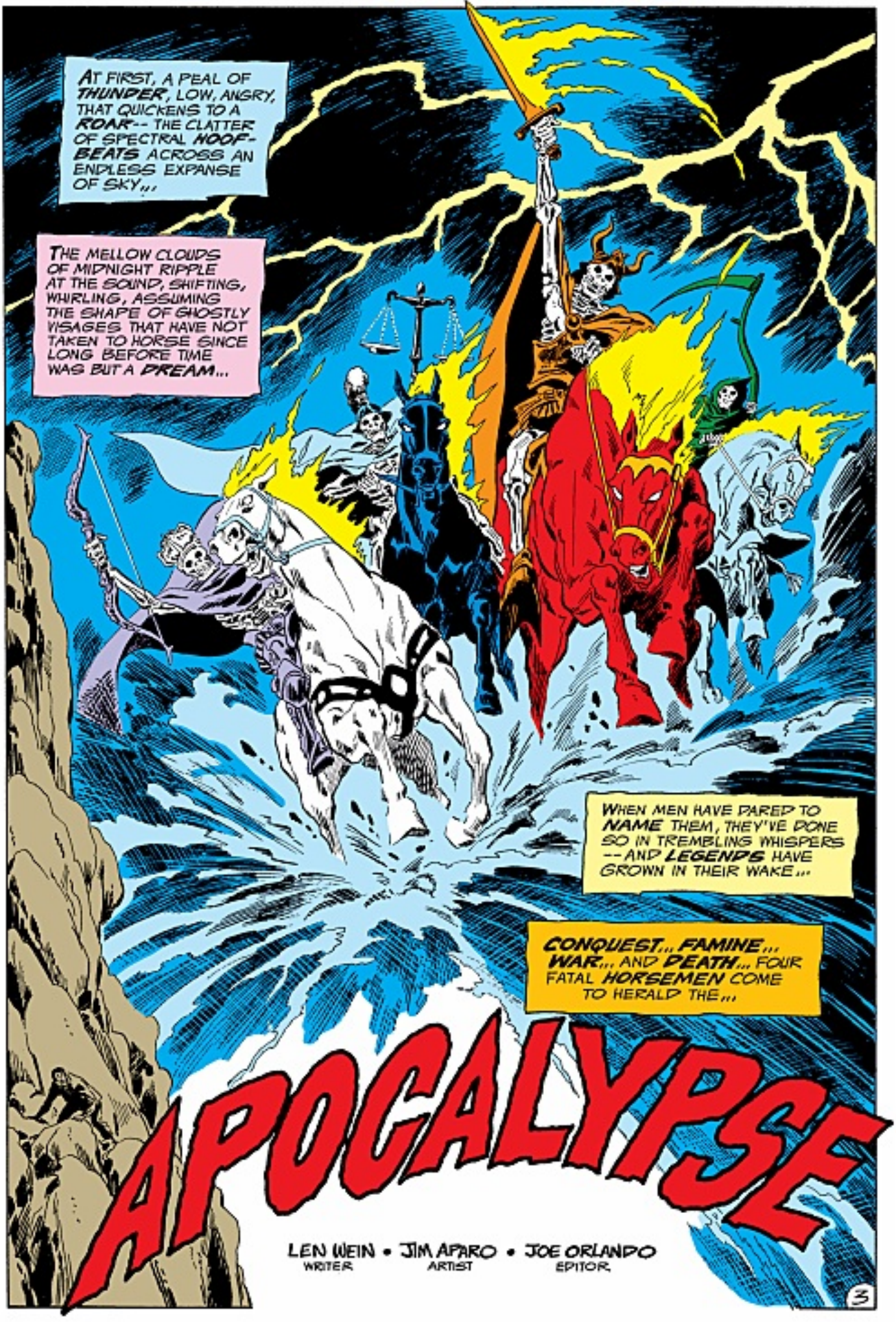
KALEIDOSCOPIC COLORS MELT INTO MIST-WET GRAY AS THE ANCIENT CONVEYANCE GRUMBLES UP THE RUTTED MOUNTAIN PATH--
AND UNSEEN EYES PEER SHARPLY OUT OF THE GLOOM...
THEY COME AGAIN--THE SILENT ONES--RIDING THEIR WAGON OF THE DEAD...
TO WHERE?

EVERY NIGHT SINCE THE CARNIVAL BEGAN, THEY HAVE COME--PRESSED IN RAGS AND RIBBONS--SAYING NOTHING--!
BUT TONIGHT... TONIGHT MIGUEL WILL MAKE THEM SPEAK! I WILL FOLLOW THEIR CORPSE-COLD CARRIAGE TO... TO...

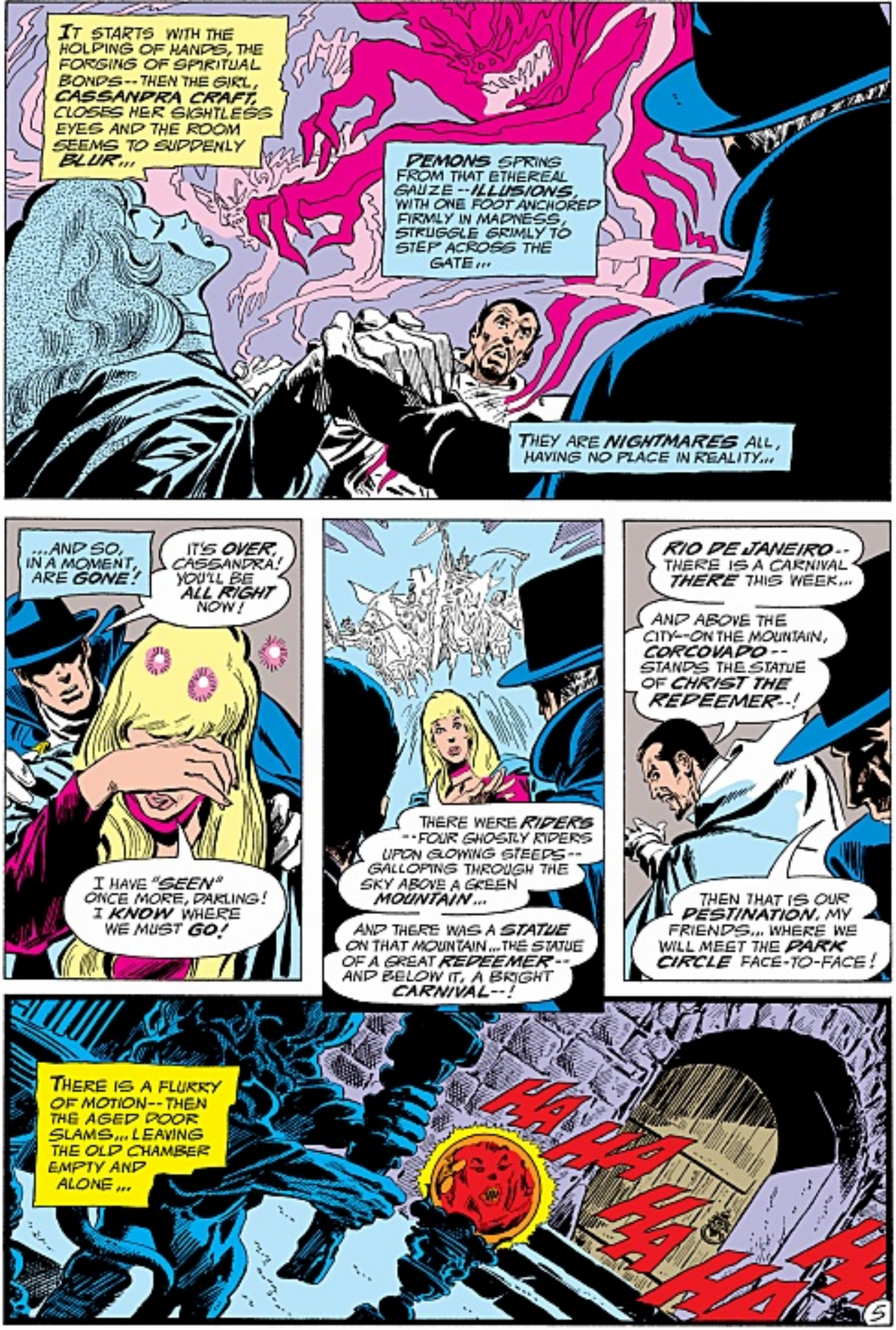

MÃE DE DEUS!!
INCANTATIONS--MECHANATIONS--THE ARCANE MOTION OF A WITHERED HAND--THE HEARSE-DRIVER MOVES IN PREORDAINED MANNER AS HE FACES THE MOUNTAIN WALL...
THEN THE ROCK SWINGS WIDE FROM A MARBLED MAW...

...AND SWALLOWS THE OLD HEARSE WHOLE...
THEY ARE GONE--! FOR DEUS--NO! IT CANNOT BE--!

THE PAD OF RUNNING FEET--THEN THE USELESS THUMPING OF FLESH UPON STONE...
DESPERATELY, MIGUEL CLAWS AT THE UNRELENTING CLIFF-WALL, FINGERTIPS SHREDDING AGAINST THE GRANITE...
?
KLOPE-TA-KLOPE
...UNTIL A SOUND COMES--TO TURN HIM FROM HIS TASK...
2

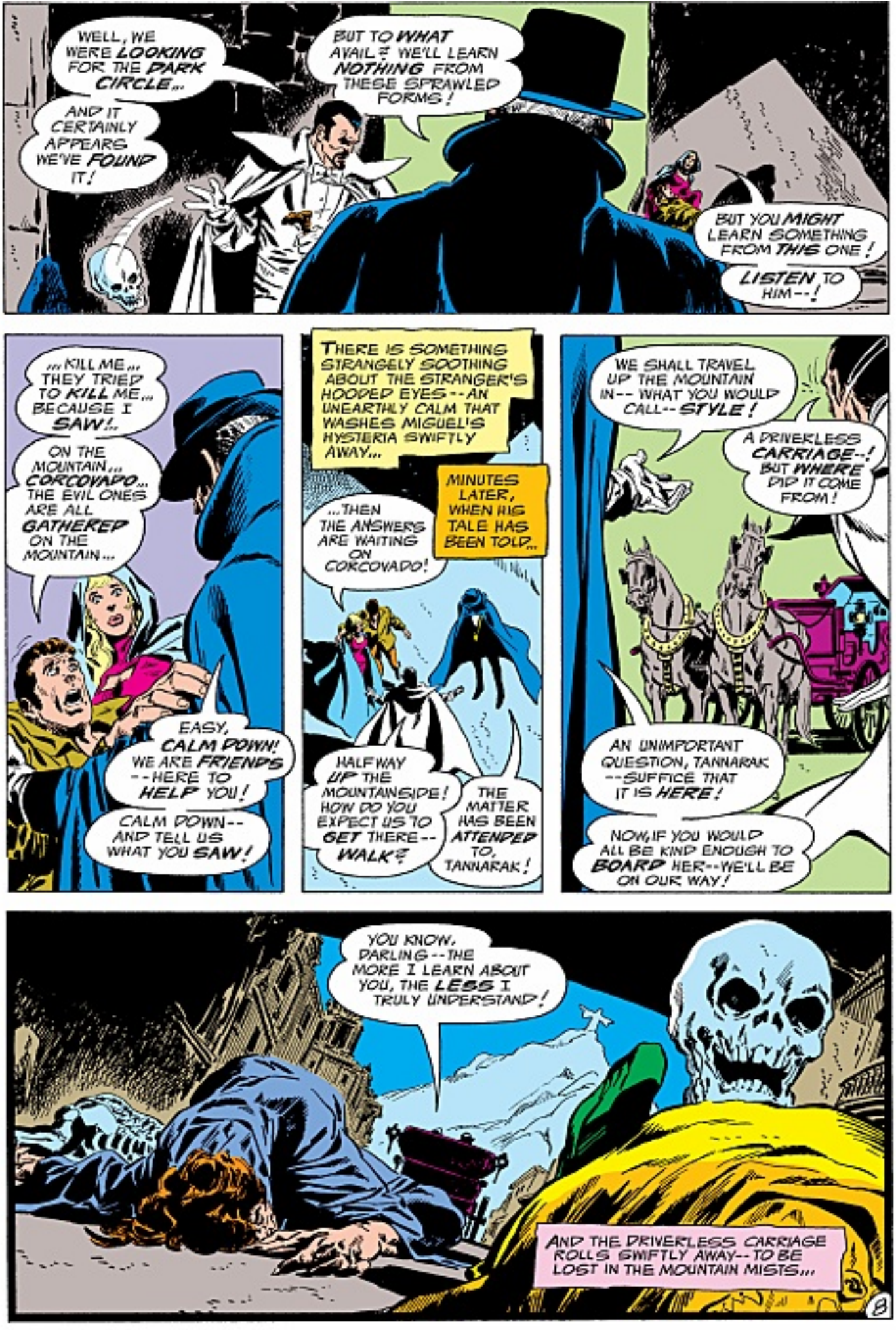

AT FIRST, A PEAL OF THUNDER, LOW, ANGRY, THAT QUICKENS TO A ROAR-- THE CLATTER OF SPECTRAL HOOF-BEATS ACROSS AN ENDLESS EXPANSE OF SKY...
THE MELLOW CLOUDS OF MIDNIGHT RIPPLE AT THE SOUND, SHIFTING, WHIRLING, ASSUMING THE SHAPE OF GHOSTLY VISAGES THAT HAVE NOT TAKEN TO HORSE SINCE LONG BEFORE TIME WAS BUT A DREAM...
WHEN MEN HAVE DARED TO NAME THEM, THEY'VE DONE SO IN TREMBLING WHISPERS --AND LEGENDS HAVE GROWN IN THEIR WAKE...
CONQUEST... FAMINE... WAR... AND DEATH... FOUR FATAL HORSEMEN COME TO HERALD THE...
APOCALYPSE
LEN WEIN WRITER • JIM APARO ARTIST • JOE ORLANDO EDITOR
3

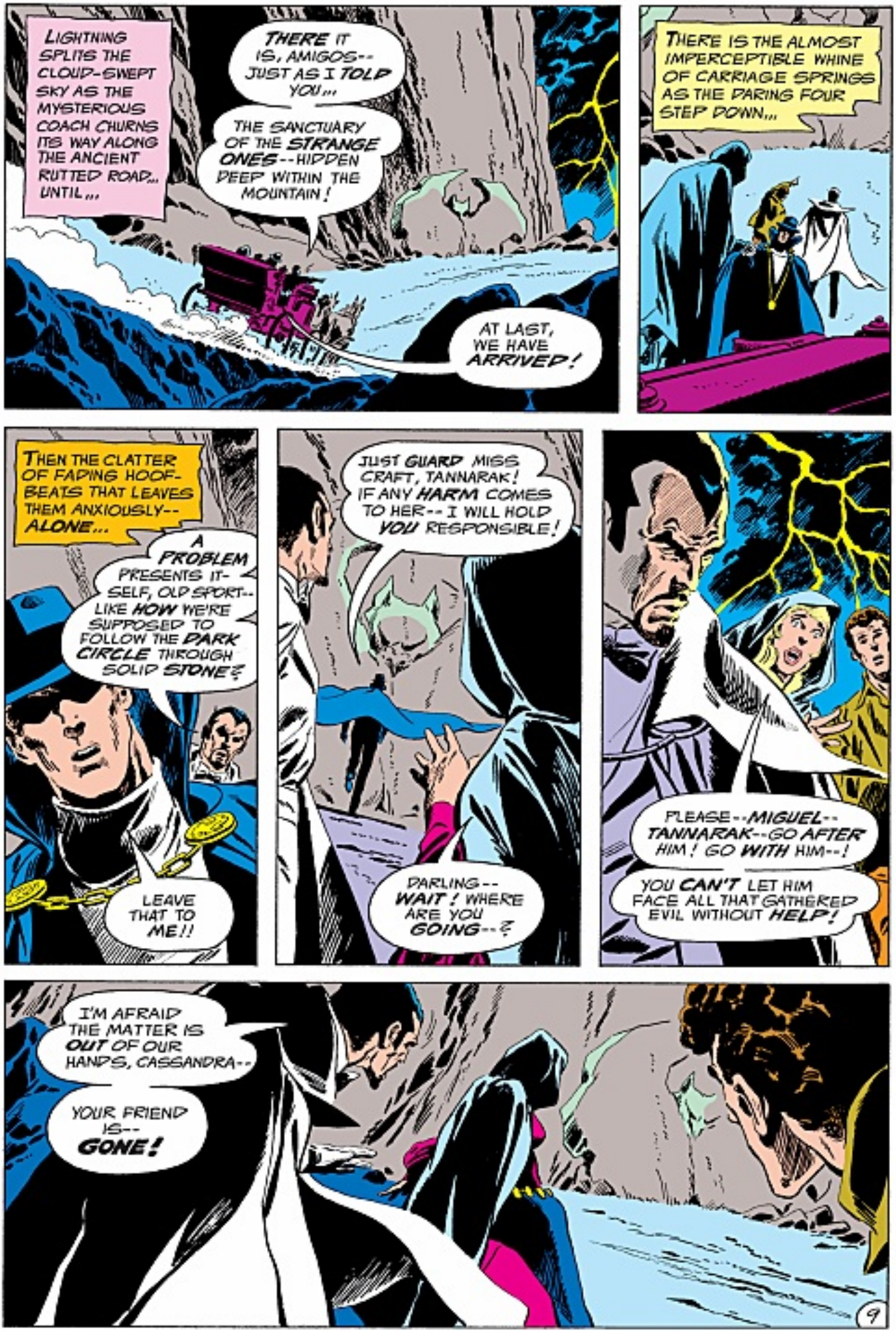
WHIRL HALF A WORLD AWAY-- FROM THE RIBBON-BEDECKED AVENUES OF RIO-- TO THE DUSTY GARRETS OF PARIS'S LEFT BANK...
AND A COMPANY WE'VE COME TO KNOW WELL...
NOTHING, TANNARAK-- ARE YOU CERTAIN?
ABSOLUTELY, OLD FRIEND! THE DARK CIRCLE WOULD NOT SIMPLY LEAVE AN AGENDA LYING AROUND, YOU KNOW!
WELL, WE HAVE FOUND THE CIRCLE'S PARIS HEADQUARTERS --AND THAT'S SOMETHING!
BUT NOT MUCH, CASSANDRA! I SHOULD KNOW WHERE NEXT THEY'LL STRIKE--
BUT SOME STRANGE FORCE KEEPS THE INFORMATION FROM ME!
SO-- YOU'RE NOT OMNIPOTENT, AFTER ALL!
MAYBE HE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE, TANNARAK-- WHEN THERE IS SOMEONE WILLING TO HELP HIM!
CASSANDRA-- NO! YOU DON'T MEAN THAT!
BUT I DO, DARLING-- IF THAT'S THE ONLY WAY WE CAN GAIN A LEAD ON THE DARK CIRCLE!
BUT THE EFFORT-- THE STRAIN--! EACH TIME YOU ATTEMPT IT, YOU TEAR YOUR EMOTIONS APART!
IT COMES WITH THE TERRITORY, SWEETHEART--NOW HUSH! IF TANNARAK WILL KINDLY TAKE MY OTHER HAND--
--THIS LITTLE LADY HAS A SEANCE TO BEGIN!
4


IT STARTS WITH THE HOLDING OF HANDS, THE FORGING OF SPIRITUAL BONDS--THEN THE GIRL, CASSANDRA CRAFT, CLOSES HER SIGHTLESS EYES AND THE ROOM SEEMS TO SUDDENLY BLUR...
DEMONS SPRING FROM THAT ETHEREAL GAUZE--ILLUSIONS, WITH ONE FOOT ANCHORED FIRMLY IN MADNESS, STRUGGLE GRIMLY TO STEP ACROSS THE GATE...
THEY ARE NIGHTMARES ALL, HAVING NO PLACE IN REALITY...
...AND SO, IN A MOMENT, ARE GONE!
IT'S OVER, CASSANDRA! YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT NOW!
I HAVE "SEEN" ONCE MORE, DARLING! I KNOW WHERE WE MUST GO!
THERE WERE RIDERS--FOUR GHOSTLY RIDERS UPON GLOWING STEEDS--GALLOPING THROUGH THE SKY ABOVE A GREEN MOUNTAIN...
AND THERE WAS A STATUE ON THAT MOUNTAIN...THE STATUE OF A GREAT REDEEMER--AND BELOW IT, A BRIGHT CARNIVAL--!
RIO DE JANEIRO--THERE IS A CARNIVAL THERE THIS WEEK...
AND ABOVE THE CITY--ON THE MOUNTAIN, CORCOVADO--STANDS THE STATUE OF CHRIST THE REDEEMER--!
THEN THAT IS OUR DESTINATION, MY FRIENDS... WHERE WE WILL MEET THE DARK CIRCLE FACE-TO-FACE!
THERE IS A FLURRY OF MOTION--THEN THE AGED DOOR SLAMS... LEAVING THE OLD CHAMBER EMPTY AND ALONE...
HA HA HA HA
5

A CARNIVAL IS TIMELESS... NIGHTS FLOW INTO DAYS FLOW INTO NIGHTS LIKE CURRENTS DOWN A RIVER SHORE. EVERYONE LIVES FOR THE MOMENT...
AND THE MOMENT IS --NOW!
HOW HUMAN: TO PRECEDE A TIME OF FASTING WITH SUCH BLATANT SELF-INDULGENCE--!
YOU CAN SERMONIZE LATER, DARLING! RIGHT NOW, WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN LOOKING!
OFF HAND, MY FRIENDS, I WOULD SAY-- THERE!
NO-- PLEASE-- NO--!
DO NOT STRUGGLE, PEON--AND IT WILL SOON BE OVER!
YOU'VE BROUGHT THIS ON YOURSELF... YOU HAVE SEEN TOO MUCH--!
THE "ONE" HAS GIVEN US THE WORD -- YOU MUST BE SILENCED --!
I SUGGEST YOU FIRST SILENCE YOURSELVES!
SORRY TO INTRUDE... BUT YOU'RE CAUSING A RUCKUS THAT CAN BE HEARD FOR MILES.
CASSANDRA-- STAY WHERE YOU ARE! THERE IS DANGER HERE!
NO, INTRUDERS-- THERE IS DEATH HERE!
6

SWISHH
DEATH?
DID YOU MEAN THAT AS A THREAT..?
...OR WAS IT MERELY WISHFUL THINKING?
THUD
WELL DONE, OLD CHUM! A TRIFLE PHYSICAL-- BUT MORE THAN APEQUATE!
A PITY YOU LACK MY FINESSE!
I'D TERM YOUR SWORD-CANE MORE DECEPTION THAN SKILL, TANNARAK!
THUNK
BUT THEN, VIOLENCE IS HARDLY WORK FOR SKILLFUL HANDS--!
WHAT--? THE HEAD..?
CHAK
IT SEEMS YOU'VE KNOCKED POOR "YORICK'S" BLOCK OFF, OLD BOY!
I WONDER WHAT HIS COHORTS LOOK LIKE UNDER THOSE HALLOWEEN MASKS?
I HAVE SOME DISTURBING INFORMATION FOR YOU, TANNARAK--
THEY ARE NOT WEARING MASKS!
7


WELL, WE WERE LOOKING FOR THE DARK CIRCLE...
AND IT CERTAINLY APPEARS WE'VE FOUND IT!
BUT TO WHAT AVAIL? WE'LL LEARN NOTHING FROM THESE SPRAWLED FORMS!
BUT YOU MIGHT LEARN SOMETHING FROM THIS ONE!
LISTEN TO HIM--!
...KILL ME... THEY TRIED TO KILL ME... BECAUSE I SAW!..
ON THE MOUNTAIN... CORCOVADO... THE EVIL ONES ARE ALL GATHERED ON THE MOUNTAIN...
EASY, CALM DOWN! WE ARE FRIENDS --HERE TO HELP YOU!
CALM DOWN-- AND TELL US WHAT YOU SAW!
THERE IS SOMETHING STRANGELY SOOTHING ABOUT THE STRANGER'S HOODED EYES--AN UNEARTHLY CALM THAT WASHES MIGUEL'S HYSTERIA SWIFTLY AWAY...
MINUTES LATER, WHEN HIS TALE HAS BEEN TOLD...
...THEN THE ANSWERS ARE WAITING ON CORCOVADO!
HALFWAY UP THE MOUNTAINSIDE! HOW DO YOU EXPECT US TO GET THERE-- WALK?
THE MATTER HAS BEEN ATTENDED TO, TANNARAK!
WE SHALL TRAVEL UP THE MOUNTAIN IN-- WHAT YOU WOULD CALL-- STYLE!
A DRIVERLESS CARRIAGE--! BUT WHERE DID IT COME FROM!
AN UNIMPORTANT QUESTION, TANNARAK --SUFFICE THAT IT IS HERE!
NOW, IF YOU WOULD ALL BE KIND ENOUGH TO BOARD HER--WE'LL BE ON OUR WAY!
YOU KNOW, DARLING--THE MORE I LEARN ABOUT YOU, THE LESS I TRULY UNDERSTAND!
AND THE DRIVERLESS CARRIAGE ROLLS SWIFTLY AWAY--TO BE LOST IN THE MOUNTAIN MISTS...
8


LIGHTNING SPLITS THE CLOUD-SWEPT SKY AS THE MYSTERIOUS COACH CHURNS ITS WAY ALONG THE ANCIENT RUTTED ROAD... UNTIL...
THERE IT IS, AMIGOS-- JUST AS I TOLD YOU...
THE SANCTUARY OF THE STRANGE ONES--HIDDEN DEEP WITHIN THE MOUNTAIN!
AT LAST, WE HAVE ARRIVED!
THERE IS THE ALMOST IMPERCEPTIBLE WHINE OF CARRIAGE SPRINGS AS THE DARING FOUR STEP DOWN...
THEN THE CLATTER OF FADING HOOF-BEATS THAT LEAVES THEM ANXIOUSLY-- ALONE...
A PROBLEM PRESENTS IT-SELF, OLD SPORT-- LIKE HOW WE'RE SUPPOSED TO FOLLOW THE DARK CIRCLE THROUGH SOLID STONE?
LEAVE THAT TO ME!!
JUST GUARD MISS CRAFT, TANNARAK! IF ANY HARM COMES TO HER-- I WILL HOLD YOU RESPONSIBLE!
DARLING-- WAIT! WHERE ARE YOU GOING--?
PLEASE--MIGUEL-- TANNARAK--GO AFTER HIM! GO WITH HIM--!
YOU CAN'T LET HIM FACE ALL THAT GATHERED EVIL WITHOUT HELP!
I'M AFRAID THE MATTER IS OUT OF OUR HANDS, CASSANDRA--
YOUR FRIEND IS-- GONE!
9

THE MOUNTAIN CORCOVADO: UPON ITS CREST STANDS THE SCULPTED IMAGE OF THE GREAT SAVIOR, A SYMBOL OF WISDOM AND PEACE...
BUT DEEP WITHIN ITS HOLLOW HEART, ANOTHER SYMBOL HOLDS SWAY...
THE ACCURSED SYMBOL OF-- THE DARK CIRCLE!
...SUDDENLY, A SHRILL SHOUT SLICES THROUGH THE STALE CAVERN AIR...
STOP YOUR DANCING, MY FELLOWS--AND REJOICE!
WE ARE IN THE PRESENSE OF...THE "ONE"!
SHE IS THE "ONE"... THE LIVING EMBODIMENT OF EVERY UNREQUITED DREAM SINCE MAN FIRST LOST HIS RIB...
FROM WITHIN HER HAVE SPRUNG ALL THE DARK FORCES... ALL THE UNBRIDLED MADNESS THAT TAINTS THE ISLAND EARTH...
SHE IS--TALA, QUEEN OF DARKNESS!
10

SHE SITS UPON THE THRONE, HER EYES BURNING THROUGH THE GATHERED THRONG LIKE EMBERS OUT OF HELL--
AND, FROM DEEP IN THE CROWD, A VOICE IS HEARD...
OH, GREAT ONE--A QUESTION: WHY HAVE YOU CALLED US ALL HERE--?
WHY HAVE YOU GATHERED THE DARK CIRCLE?
ONE LOOK TO THE SKY--AND YOU WOULD KNOW THE REASON! AFTER ALL THESE MONTHS..THE SORCERER'S MOON IS ON THE WANE!
ONLY ONE YEAR IN EACH CENTURY DOES IT SHINE--AND WHEN IT FADES, YOUR POWER FADES WITH IT!
IN THE PAST MONTHS, WE'VE ATTEMPTED TO CONQUER HUMANITY BY SUBTLE MEANS--AND EACH TIME HAVE BEEN THWARTED!
NOW TIME ALLOWS US ONLY ONE FINAL CHANCE--!
IT WILL TAKE ALL YOUR POWERS COMBINED TO DO WHAT MUST BE DONE... BRING FATE'S FOUR HORSEMEN ACROSS THE MYSTIC GATE TO SOW THE SEEDS OF WORLDWIDE DESTRUCTION--!
FOR IF THE DARK CIRCLE CANNOT RULE THE EARTH--WE WILL SURELY DESTROY IT!
BUT WHAT IF HE WHO DEFEATED US BEFORE SHOULD DEFY US AGAIN?
SHOULD WE NOT FIRST SEEK HIM OUT--AND END HIS OPPOSITION?
BUT THERE IS NO NEED TO SEARCH FOR HIM...
...FOR HE STANDS THERE AMONG YOU!
NOW, DEAL WITH HIM!
HA HA HA
11

THERE IS A MOMENT OF STUNNED HESITATION-- THEN...
SURROUND HIM--! HE CANNOT DEFEAT US ALL!
FOOLS--
YOU MAY BE THE CIRCLE OF DARKNESS...
...BUT I AM THE ARROW OF LIGHT!
I WILL PIERCE THIS CIRCLE'S BLACK HEART!
EVEN THE STRONGEST OF ARROWS CAN BE BROKEN!
POOR STRANGER... OBSTINATE TO THE FINISH! A PITY... FOR HE IS BEAUTIFUL!
TO THE DARK-GARBED WANDERER, TIME IS A SMOTHERING TAPESTRY LACED WITH THE DISTANT RATTLE OF CHAINS...
--AND VIOLENT ACTIONS THAT WRENCH HIM BACK TO REALITY ONCE MORE...
SO...YOU'VE REJOINED US, DEAR STRANGER--! DON'T BOTHER TO STRUGGLE WITH THE CHAINS--!
OUR SUPERIOR STRENGTH PUTS YOU AT OUR MERCY!
YOUR KIND KNOWS NO MERCY, TALA!
YOU MAY DESTROY ME-- BUT YOU'LL NEVER SUCCEED...
FOR WHEN I FALL, OTHERS WILL RISE TO CONTINUE THE FIGHT!
SNAP
OH, YES-- THE OTHERS--I ALMOST FORGOT ABOUT THEM!
12

WE FOUND THESE THREE LOITERING ABOUT ON OUR DOORSTEP!
DO THEY BELONG TO YOU?
SORRY ABOUT THIS, OLD FRIEND-- APPEARS WE'VE BLOWN IT!
NO, WE HAVEN'T--! JUST LET ME GET MY HANDS ON...

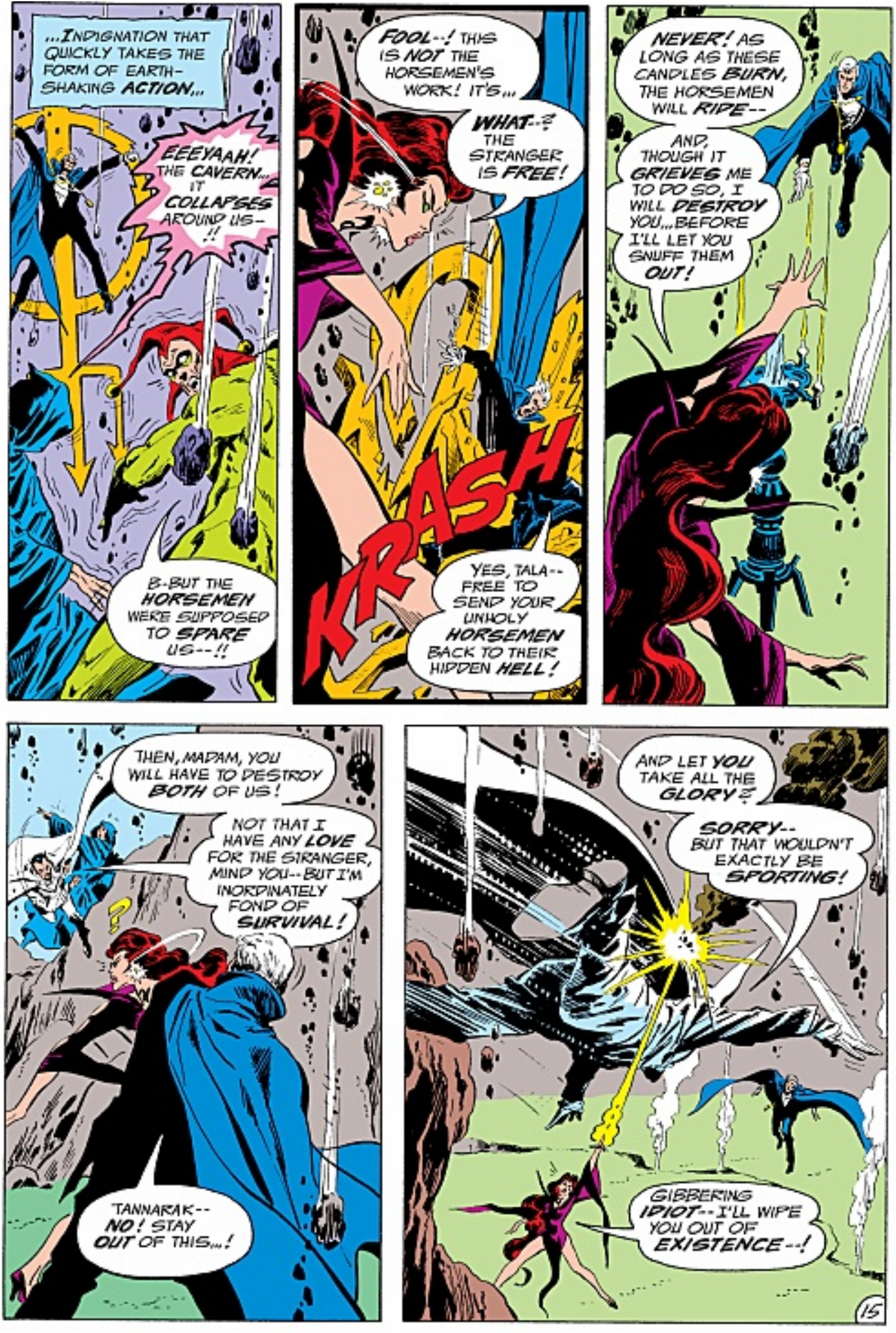
...ON NOTHING, MY LITTLE BLIND BIRD!
TALA, YOU HEARTLESS VIXEN... IF YOU HARM THAT GIRL--!

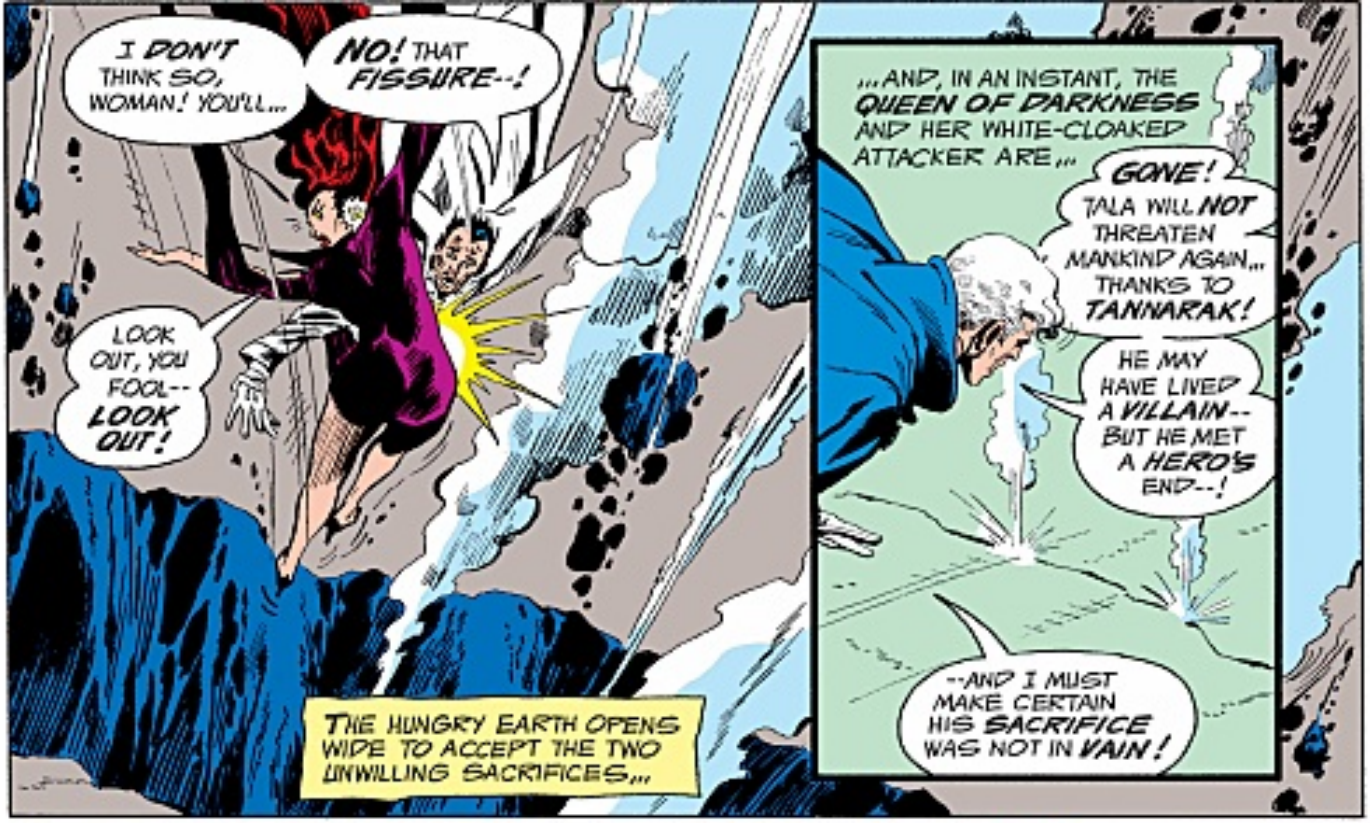
PLEASE, STRANGER-- NO SPEECHES! YOUR NEW-FOUND FRIEND WILL AWAIT MY PLEASURE WITH THE REST OF YOU!
RIGHT NOW, THERE ARE OTHER THINGS THAT DEMAND MY ATTENTION!

OPEN THE PORTALS... LET IN THE NIGHT!..
IT IS TIME FOR THE ULTIMATE RITUAL TO-- BEGIN!

THIS IS THE TALON OF TIME, DEAR STRANGER-- CAPABLE OF MANY THINGS!
WITH THE POWER OF THE DARK CIRCLE TO GUIDE IT, IT WILL TEAR OPEN THE VERY GATES OF HELL-- AND LOOSE THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE UPON THE LAND!
WATCH, STRANGER-- WATCH AND SEE!
13

LAUGHTER--HARSH, MANIACAL--SHATTERS THE VELVET MIDNIGHT AS TALA'S BLAZING FINGER FINDS THE EAGER CANDLE WICKS...
ONE AFTER ANOTHER, THE TALON'S CLAWS IGNITE, FILLING THE CAVERN WITH A WILD, UNEARTHLY GLOW THAT IS ECHOED IN THE SKY BEYOND...
SOMETHING MOVES IN THAT CELESTIAL DARKNESS AT FIRST, ONLY LIGHTNING--JAGGED, BLINDING FINGERS THAT POINT EARTHWARD WITH DISPAIN...
...AND THEN--SOMETHING ELSE...
LOOK AT THEM, STRANGER... AT THE SHADOWS IN THE SKY! THEY ARE--
--THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE--
--AND THEY BRING WITH THEM--THE END OF THE WORLD!!
HAHA HAHA
MADNESS GALLOPS THROUGH THE RAGING HEAVENS... AND ACROSS THE EARTH THERE IS PANIC AND CONFUSION...
...SAVE ON CORCOVADO!
HERE, WHERE A NOW-TREMBLING STATUE ONCE SPREAD HOPE AND CONTENTMENT, THERE IS ONLY THE PRESENCE OF RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION...
14


...INDIGNATION THAT QUICKLY TAKES THE FORM OF EARTH-SHAKING ACTION...
EEEYAAH! THE CAVERN... IT COLLAPSES AROUND US--!!
B-BUT THE HORSEMEN WERE SUPPOSED TO SPARE US--!!
FOOL--! THIS IS NOT THE HORSEMEN'S WORK! IT'S...
WHAT--? THE STRANGER IS FREE!
KRASH
YES, TALA-- FREE TO SEND YOUR UNHOLY HORSEMEN BACK TO THEIR HIDDEN HELL!
NEVER! AS LONG AS THESE CANDLES BURN, THE HORSEMEN WILL RIDE--
AND, THOUGH IT GRIEVES ME TO DO SO, I WILL DESTROY YOU... BEFORE I'LL LET YOU SNUFF THEM OUT!
THEN, MADAM, YOU WILL HAVE TO DESTROY BOTH OF US!
NOT THAT I HAVE ANY LOVE FOR THE STRANGER, MIND YOU-- BUT I'M INORDINATELY FOND OF SURVIVAL!
TANNARAK-- NO! STAY OUT OF THIS...!
AND LET YOU TAKE ALL THE GLORY?
SORRY-- BUT THAT WOULDN'T EXACTLY BE SPORTING!
GIBBERING IDIOT-- I'LL WIPE YOU OUT OF EXISTENCE--!
15

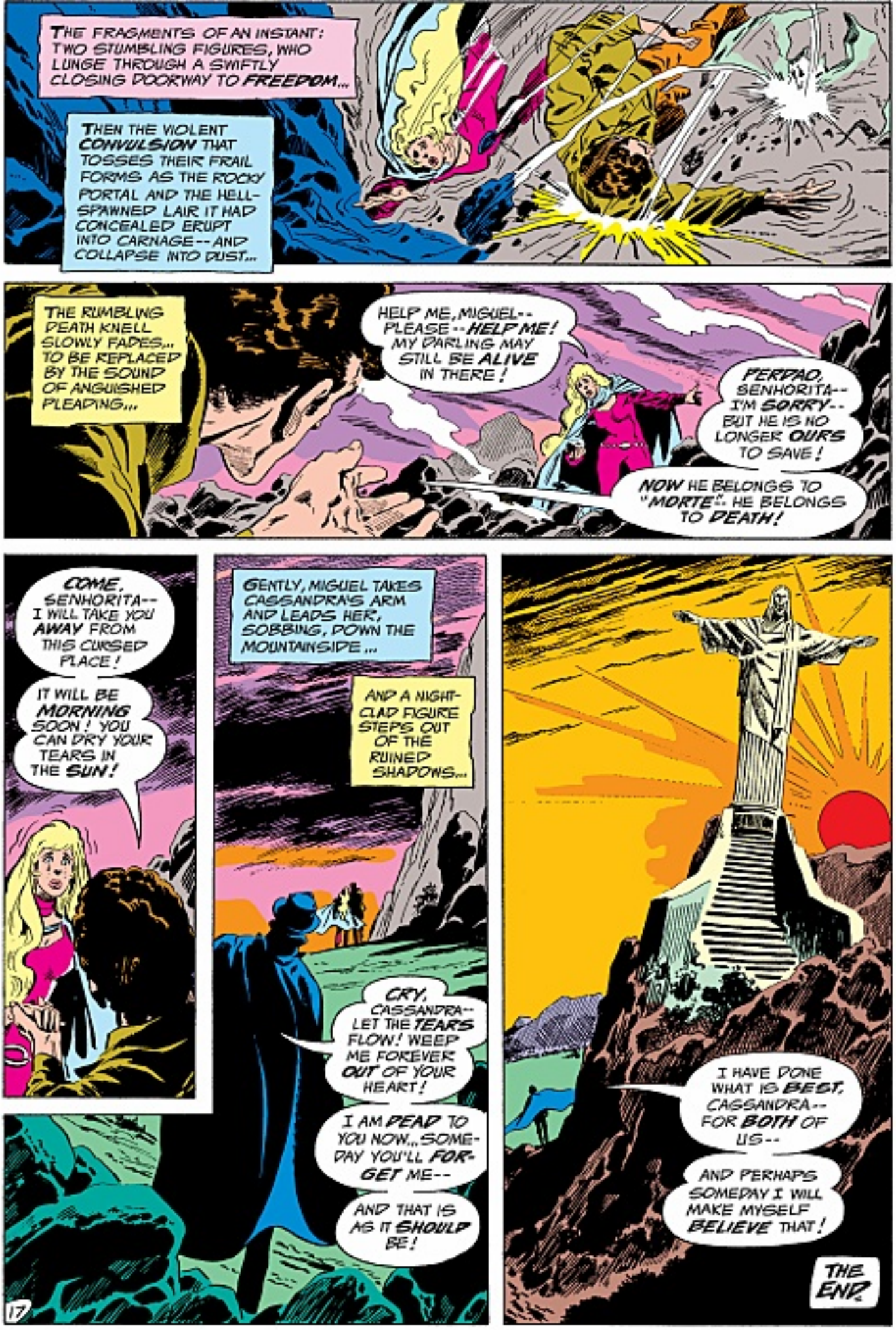

I DON'T THINK SO, WOMAN! YOU'LL...
NO! THAT FISSURE--!
LOOK OUT, YOU FOOL-- LOOK OUT!
THE HUNGRY EARTH OPENS WIDE TO ACCEPT THE TWO UNWILLING SACRIFICES...
...AND, IN AN INSTANT, THE QUEEN OF DARKNESS AND HER WHITE-CLOAKED ATTACKER ARE...
GONE!
TALA WILL NOT THREATEN MANKIND AGAIN... THANKS TO TANNARAK!
HE MAY HAVE LIVED A VILLAIN-- BUT HE MET A HERO'S END--!
--AND I MUST MAKE CERTAIN HIS SACRIFICE WAS NOT IN VAIN!

AND WITH ONE FLOWING MOTION OF A BLACK-CLAD ARM...
THE TALON OF TIME IS EXTINGUISHED-- AND WITHOUT ITS HELLISH LIGHT, THE FOUR DARK RIDERS MUST RETURN WHENCE THEY CAME!
NOW, I'D BEST ATTEND TO CASSANDRA AND MIGUEL-- GET THEM OUT OF HERE BEFORE...
SSSSSTTTT
POR DEUS, SENHOR-- BEHIND YOU!

CURSED ONE!.. YOU'VE SNUFFED OUT THE CANDLE-- RUINED OUR FINAL HOPE FOR VICTORY--
BUT WE WILL HAVE OUR REVENGE!
NO-- STAY TO SLAY ME--AND YOU ARE DOOMED AS WELL!
THIS BENIGHTED CAVERN SHALL NOT SURVIVE MUCH LONGER!

SO BE IT, THEN! WE PERISH WILLINGLY TO KNOW YOU SHARE OUR FATE!
PERHAPS-- BUT YOU'LL NOT DESTROY TWO INNOCENTS, AS WELL!
MIGUEL-- QUICKLY-- BEFORE THE GREAT DOORS CLOSE!.. TAKE CASSANDRA--AND BE GONE!

BUT AS THE DARING YOUNG MAN OBEYS THE STRANGER'S COMMAND...
DARLING-- NO! PLEASE-- I WANT TO STAY WITH YOU--!
IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT, CASSANDRA! JUST TRUST ME-- AND GO!
COME, SENHORITA-- POR FAVOR!
THE CAVERN IS ABOUT TO-- COLLAPSE!
16


THE FRAGMENTS OF AN INSTANT: TWO STUMBLING FIGURES, WHO LUNGE THROUGH A SWIFTLY CLOSING DOORWAY TO FREEDOM...
THEN THE VIOLENT CONVULSION THAT TOSSES THEIR FRAIL FORMS AS THE ROCKY PORTAL AND THE HELL-SPAWNED LAIR IT HAD CONCEALED ERUPT INTO CARNAGE--AND COLLAPSE INTO DUST...
THE RUMBLING DEATH KNELL SLOWLY FADES... TO BE REPLACED BY THE SOUND OF ANGUISHED PLEADING...
HELP ME, MIGUEL--PLEASE--HELP ME! MY DARLING MAY STILL BE ALIVE IN THERE!
PERDAO, SENHORITA--I'M SORRY--BUT HE IS NO LONGER OURS TO SAVE!
NOW HE BELONGS TO "MORTE". HE BELONGS TO DEATH!
COME, SENHORITA--I WILL TAKE YOU AWAY FROM THIS CURSED PLACE!
IT WILL BE MORNING SOON! YOU CAN DRY YOUR TEARS IN THE SUN!
GENTLY, MIGUEL TAKES CASSANDRA'S ARM AND LEADS HER, SOBBING, DOWN THE MOUNTAINSIDE...
AND A NIGHT-CLAD FIGURE STEPS OUT OF THE RUINED SHADOWS...
CRY, CASSANDRA--LET THE TEARS FLOW! WEEP ME FOREVER OUT OF YOUR HEART!
I AM DEAD TO YOU NOW... SOMEDAY YOU'LL FORGET ME--
AND THAT IS AS IT SHOULD BE!
17
I HAVE DONE WHAT IS BEST, CASSANDRA--FOR BOTH OF US--
AND PERHAPS SOMEDAY I WILL MAKE MYSELF BELIEVE THAT!
THE END

Cover for **JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA #100** (1972)
Art by Nick Cardy

You are cordially invited to attend the greatest single gathering of super-heroes ever recorded:- The 100th ANNIVERSARY MEETING of the...
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
UNKNOWN SOLDIER OF VICTORY
ON A LONELY, WINDSWEPT MOUNTAIN PEAK, A SOLITARY GRAVE STANDS IN MUTE TESTIMONY TO THE COURAGE OF A MAN -- A WARRIOR WHO FELL IN DEFENSE OF HIS WORLD -- WHOSE NAME IS KNOWN ONLY TO GOD.
NOW, AFTER MANY LONG YEARS, OTHERS COME IN SEARCH OF THIS DOOMED CHAMPION'S FORGOTTEN IDENTITY. CAN EVEN THE GREATEST HEROES OF TWO DIFFERENT EARTHS UNCOVER THE SECRET OF...
"The UNKNOWN SOLDIER of VICTORY!"
A MONUMENTAL MASTERWORK PRESENTED BY: JULIUS SCHWARTZ, EDITOR—LEN WEIN, WRITER—DICK DILLIN & JOE GIELLA, ARTISTS — WITH THANKS TO THE WRITERS AND ARTISTS WHO SHAPED THIS HISTORY-MAKING ADVENTURE THOSE MANY YEARS AGO.
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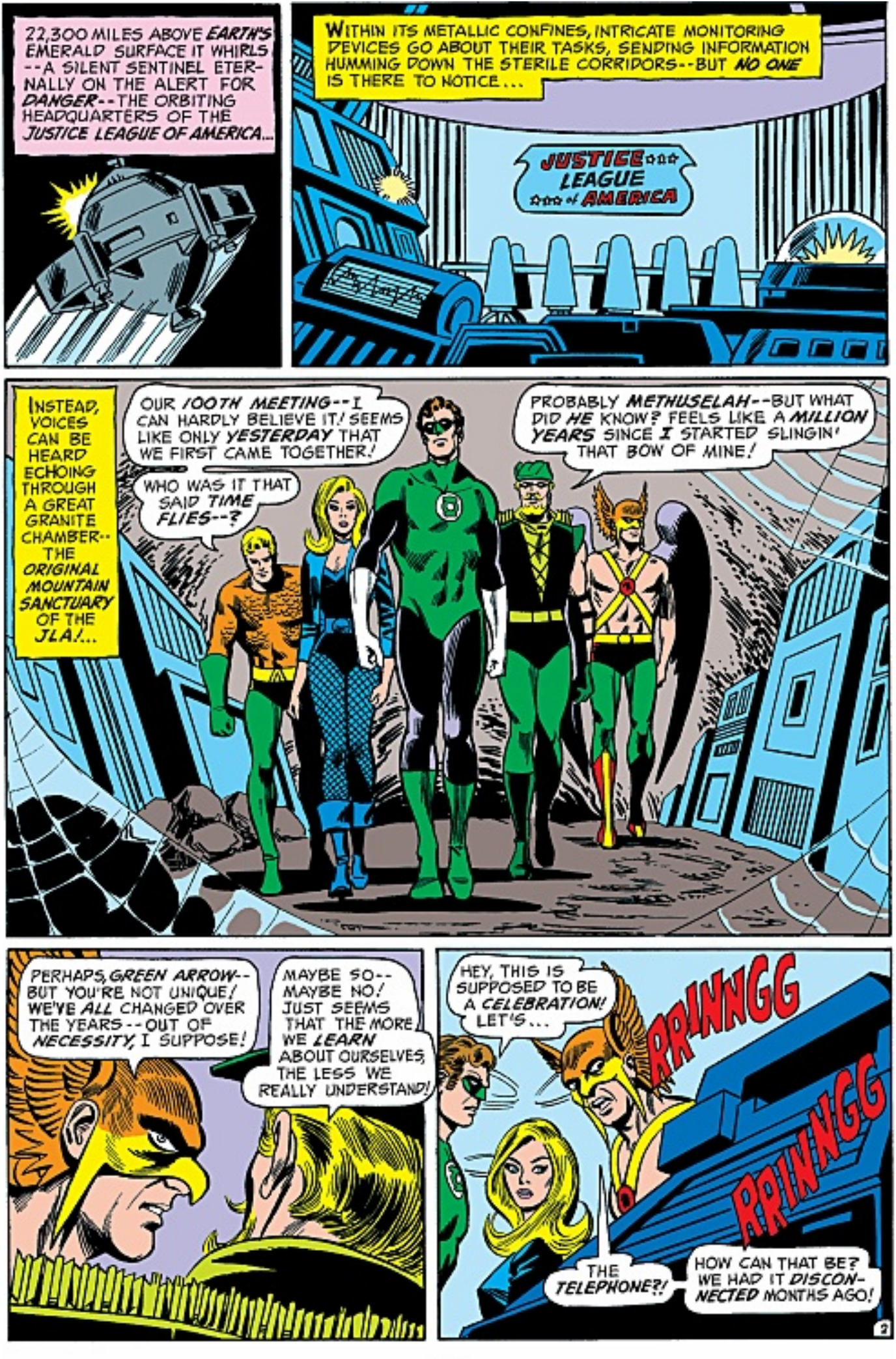
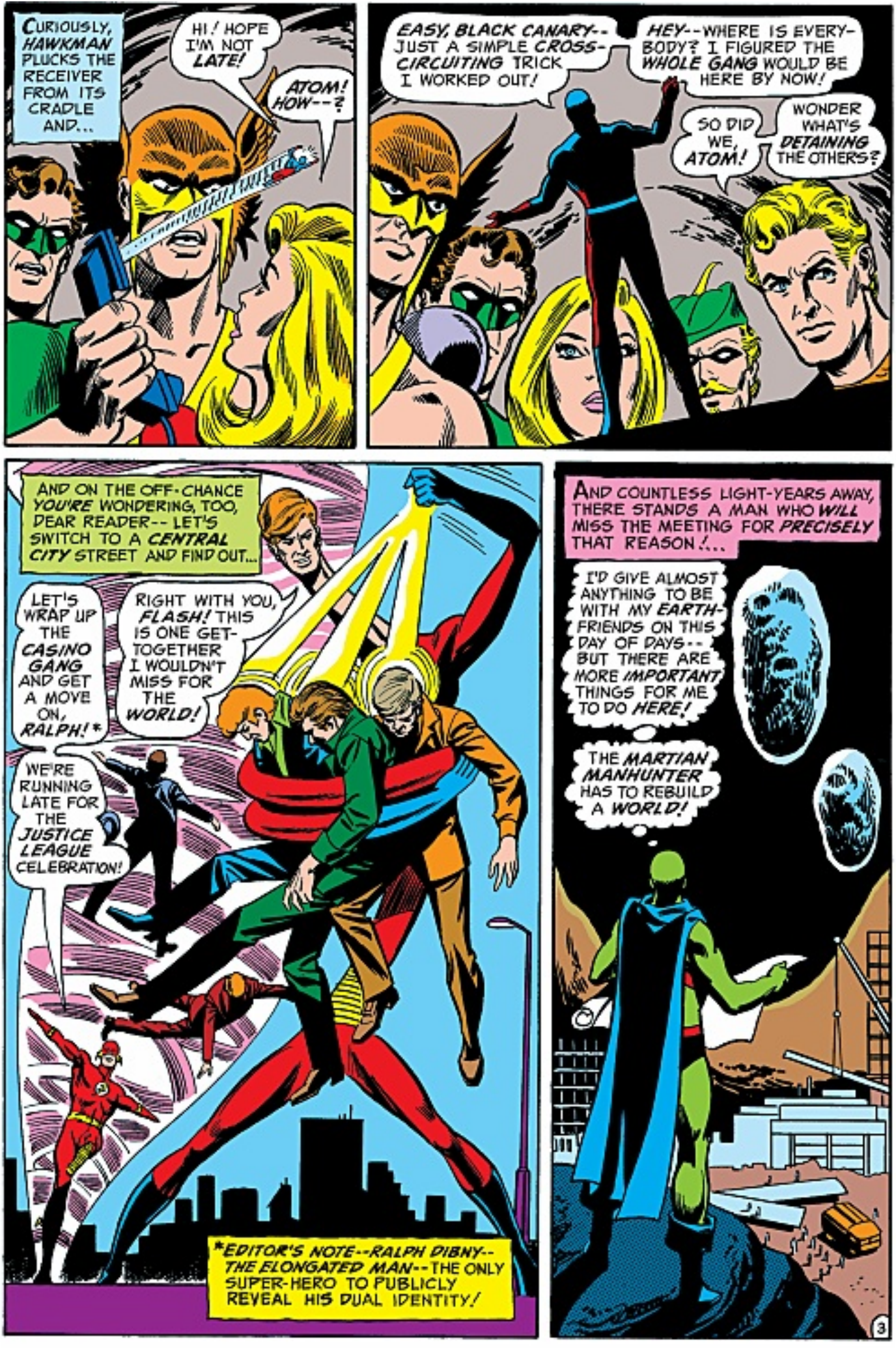
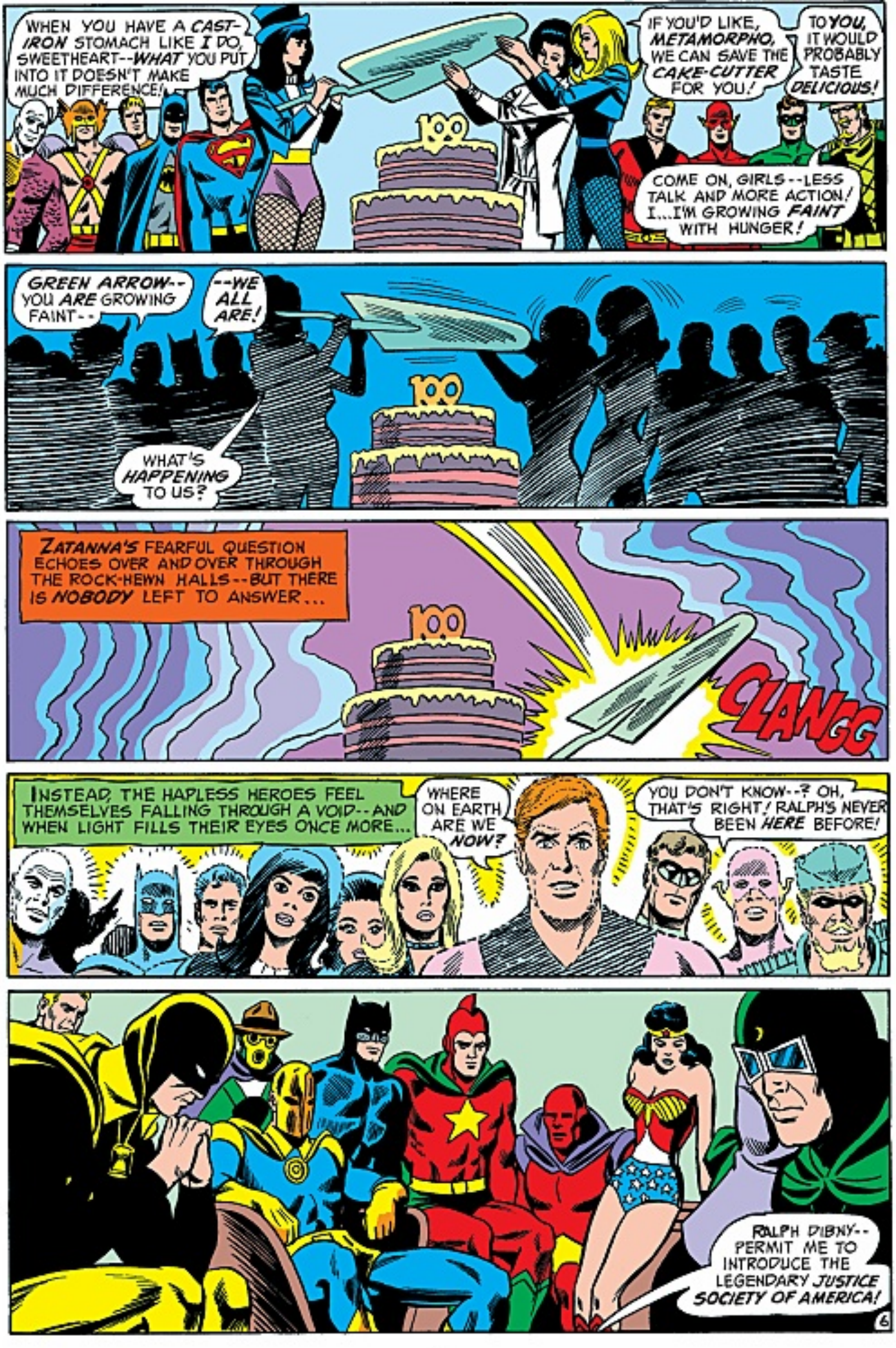
1

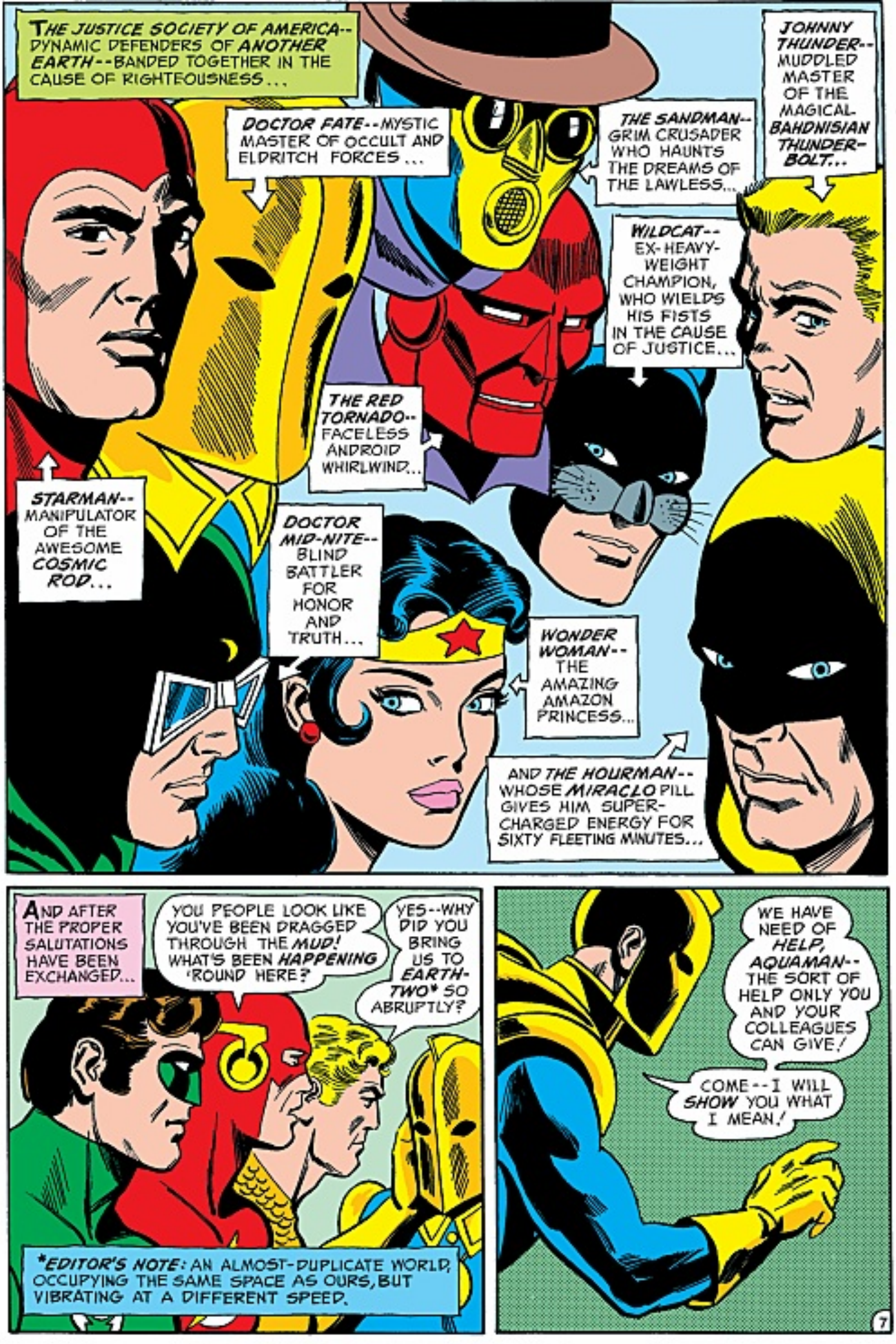

22,300 MILES ABOVE EARTH'S EMERALD SURFACE IT WHIRLS --A SILENT SENTINEL ETERNALLY ON THE ALERT FOR DANGER--THE ORBITING HEADQUARTERS OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA...
WITHIN ITS METALLIC CONFINES, INTRICATE MONITORING DEVICES GO ABOUT THEIR TASKS, SENDING INFORMATION HUMMING DOWN THE STERILE CORRIDORS--BUT NO ONE IS THERE TO NOTICE...
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
INSTEAD, VOICES CAN BE HEARD ECHOING THROUGH A GREAT GRANITE CHAMBER-- THE ORIGINAL MOUNTAIN SANCTUARY OF THE JLA!...
OUR 100TH MEETING--I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT! SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY THAT WE FIRST CAME TOGETHER!
WHO WAS IT THAT SAID TIME FLIES--?
PROBABLY METHUSELAH--BUT WHAT DID HE KNOW? FEELS LIKE A MILLION YEARS SINCE I STARTED SLINGIN' THAT BOW OF MINE!
PERHAPS, GREEN ARROW-- BUT YOU'RE NOT UNIQUE! WE'VE ALL CHANGED OVER THE YEARS--OUT OF NECESSITY, I SUPPOSE!
MAYBE SO-- MAYBE NO! JUST SEEMS THAT THE MORE WE LEARN ABOUT OURSELVES, THE LESS WE REALLY UNDERSTAND!
HEY, THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A CELEBRATION! LET'S...
RRINNGG
RRINNGG
THE TELEPHONE?!
HOW CAN THAT BE? WE HAD IT DISCONNECTED MONTHS AGO!

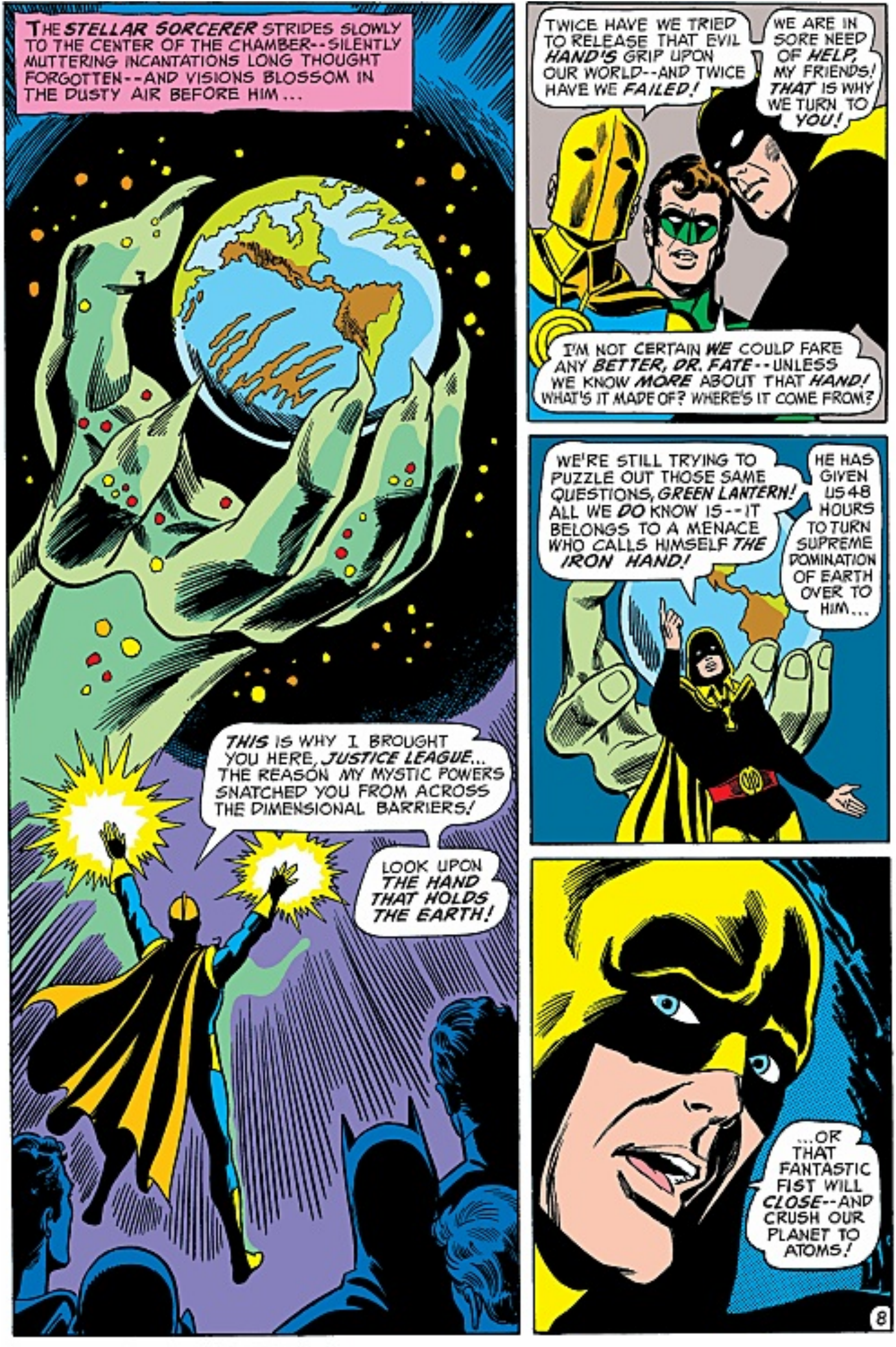

CURIOUSLY, HAWKMAN PLUCKS THE RECEIVER FROM ITS CRADLE AND...
HI! HOPE I'M NOT LATE!
ATOM! HOW--?
EASY, BLACK CANARY-- JUST A SIMPLE CROSS-CIRCUITING TRICK I WORKED OUT!
HEY--WHERE IS EVERYBODY? I FIGURED THE WHOLE GANG WOULD BE HERE BY NOW!
SO DID WE, ATOM!
WONDER WHAT'S DETAINING THE OTHERS?
AND ON THE OFF-CHANCE YOU'RE WONDERING, TOO, DEAR READER-- LET'S SWITCH TO A CENTRAL CITY STREET AND FIND OUT...
LET'S WRAP UP THE CASINO GANG AND GET A MOVE ON, RALPH!*
RIGHT WITH YOU, FLASH! THIS IS ONE GET-TOGETHER I WOULDN'T MISS FOR THE WORLD!
WE'RE RUNNING LATE FOR THE JUSTICE LEAGUE CELEBRATION!
*EDITOR'S NOTE--RALPH DIBNY-- THE ELONGATED MAN--THE ONLY SUPER-HERO TO PUBLICLY REVEAL HIS DUAL IDENTITY!
AND COUNTLESS LIGHT-YEARS AWAY, THERE STANDS A MAN WHO WILL MISS THE MEETING FOR PRECISELY THAT REASON!...
I'D GIVE ALMOST ANYTHING TO BE WITH MY EARTH-FRIENDS ON THIS DAY OF DAYS-- BUT THERE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS FOR ME TO DO HERE!
THE MARTIAN MANHUNTER HAS TO REBUILD A WORLD!
3

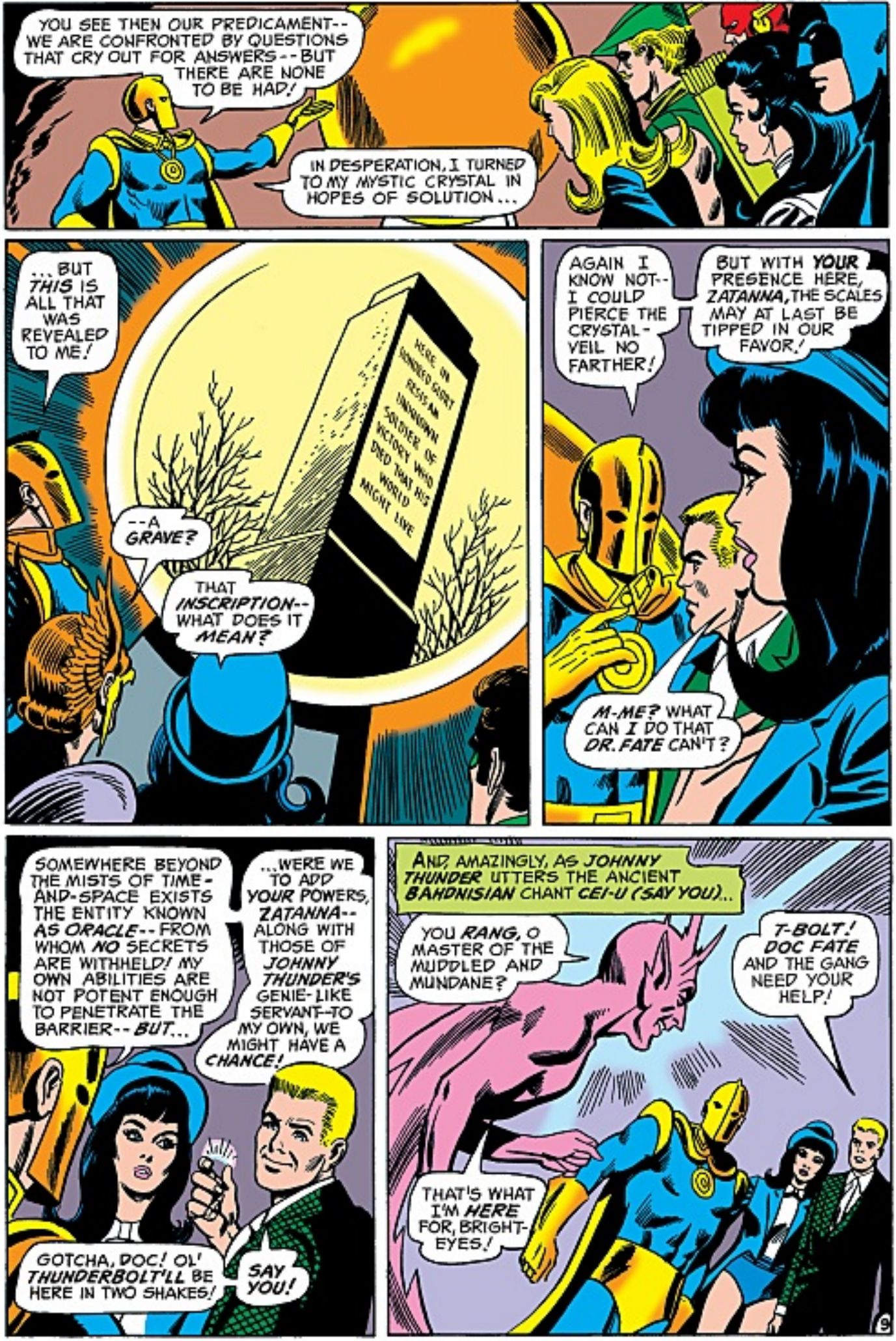
FROM A WORLD-BUILDER, WE SHIFT TO THE PALATIAL ESTATE OF A WORLD-BEATER-- INDUSTRIALIST SIMON STAGG...
MASON, WHERE IN BLUE BLAZES DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?
SORRY, STAGGSY, OLD PAL! REX MASON MAY BE ON YOUR PAYROLL -- BUT METAMORPHO, THE ELEMENT MAN, GOES WHERE HE WANTS TO GO...
...AND RIGHT NOW, HE'S FLYING TO A PARTY!
WHILE HALF A CONTINENT AWAY, A CERTAIN SNAPPER CARR GAZES OUT HIS WINDOW--AND WONDERS...
IMAGINE! AFTER THE WAY I BETRAYED THEM,* THE JLA STILL INVITED ME TO THEIR 100TH ANNIVERSARY! I'D GIVE MY RIGHT ARM TO GO-- BUT I CAN'T!
AFTER WHAT I DID TO THEM, I JUST COULDN'T FACE THEM AGAIN!
*EDITOR'S NOTE: THE STORY OF SNAPPER'S BETRAYAL APPEARED IN JLA #77.
AND IN THE SHADOW-STREWN BACK-ALLEYS OF GOTHAM CITY...
TH-THE B-B-BATMAN! WE'VE HAD IT!
STOP FALLING ALL OVER YOUR MOUTH, MARTY--AND PLUG HIM!
HE'S JUST ONE GUY!
YOU'D THINK BY NOW THESE PUNKS WOULD KNOW BETTER! I'D BETTER WRAP THEM UP-- AND GET MOVING!
I'VE GOT A STOP TO MAKE ON MY WAY TO THE JLA MEETING!
4

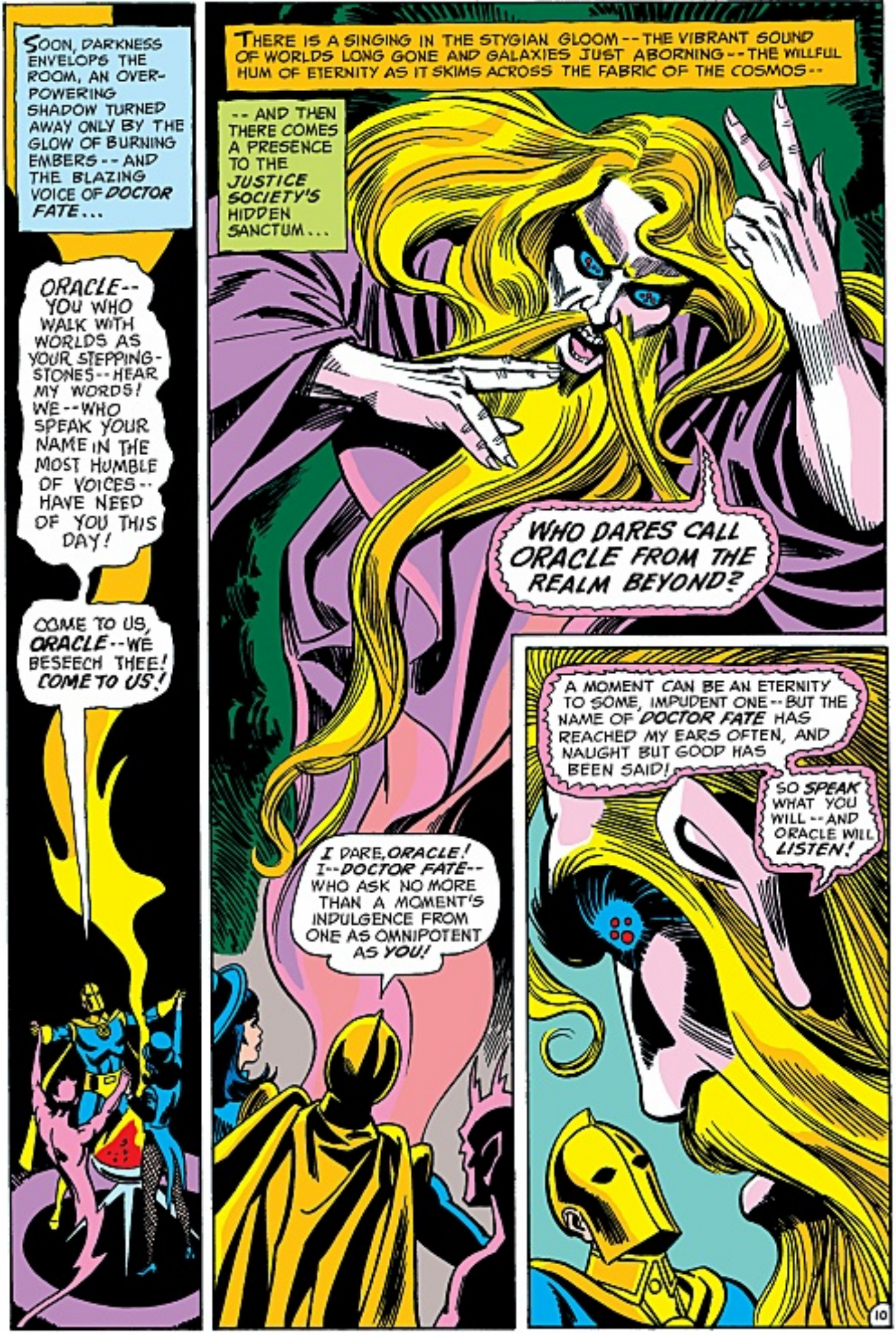
AND 25 TRILLION MILES FROM EARTH, ON A LUSH PLANET ORBITING THE STAR-SUN ALPHA CENTAURI, TWO FAMILIAR FIGURES ARC THROUGH THE EMERALD SKY...
ACCORDING TO SARDATH'S CALCULATIONS, THE ZETA-BEAM* WON'T WEAR OFF FOR SEVERAL DAYS--TOO LATE FOR ME TO ATTEND THE JUSTICE LEAGUE EXTRAVAGANZA!
ALANNA, DARLING--THEY'LL JUST HAVE TO GET ALONG WITHOUT ADAM STRANGE!
*EDITOR'S NOTE: A TELEPORTATIONAL BEAM THAT EARTHMAN ADAM STRANGE USES TO TRAVEL INSTANTLY TO THE PLANET RANN!
AT LAST WE COME FULL-CIRCLE--AND RETURN TO THE JLA'S LABYRINTHINE MOUNTAIN SANCTUARY...
100 MEETINGS IS A LONG TIME, FLASH--LOTS OF THINGS CAN HAPPEN!
I'LL SAY! I WAS A ROOKIE POLICE-SCIENTIST WHEN I JOINED THIS GROUP--NOW I'M A MARRIED MAN!
REALLY, FLASH--THAT'S THE MOST DEPRESSING THING I'VE HEARD ALL DAY!
CAN'T YOU CHANGE THE SUBJECT?
YOU HAVE THE MOST DISCONCERTING WAY OF DROPPING IN ON PEOPLE!
BUT...WELCOME TO THE FESTIVITIES!
ZATANNA-?!
GREETINGS, PEOPLE! LOOK WHO I PICKED UP!
DIANA PRINCE--WONDER WOMAN! HOW GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN!
I ALMOST DIDN'T COME, SUPERMAN! YOUR FRIEND HERE HAD TO--TWIST MY ARM!
WELL, NOW THAT YOU ARE HERE, WHY DON'T YOU USE THAT PRETTY ARM OF YOURS TO HELP CUT THE CAKE!
YOU MEN! ALL YOU EVER THINK ABOUT IS YOUR STOMACHS!
I'M STARVING!
100
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
5

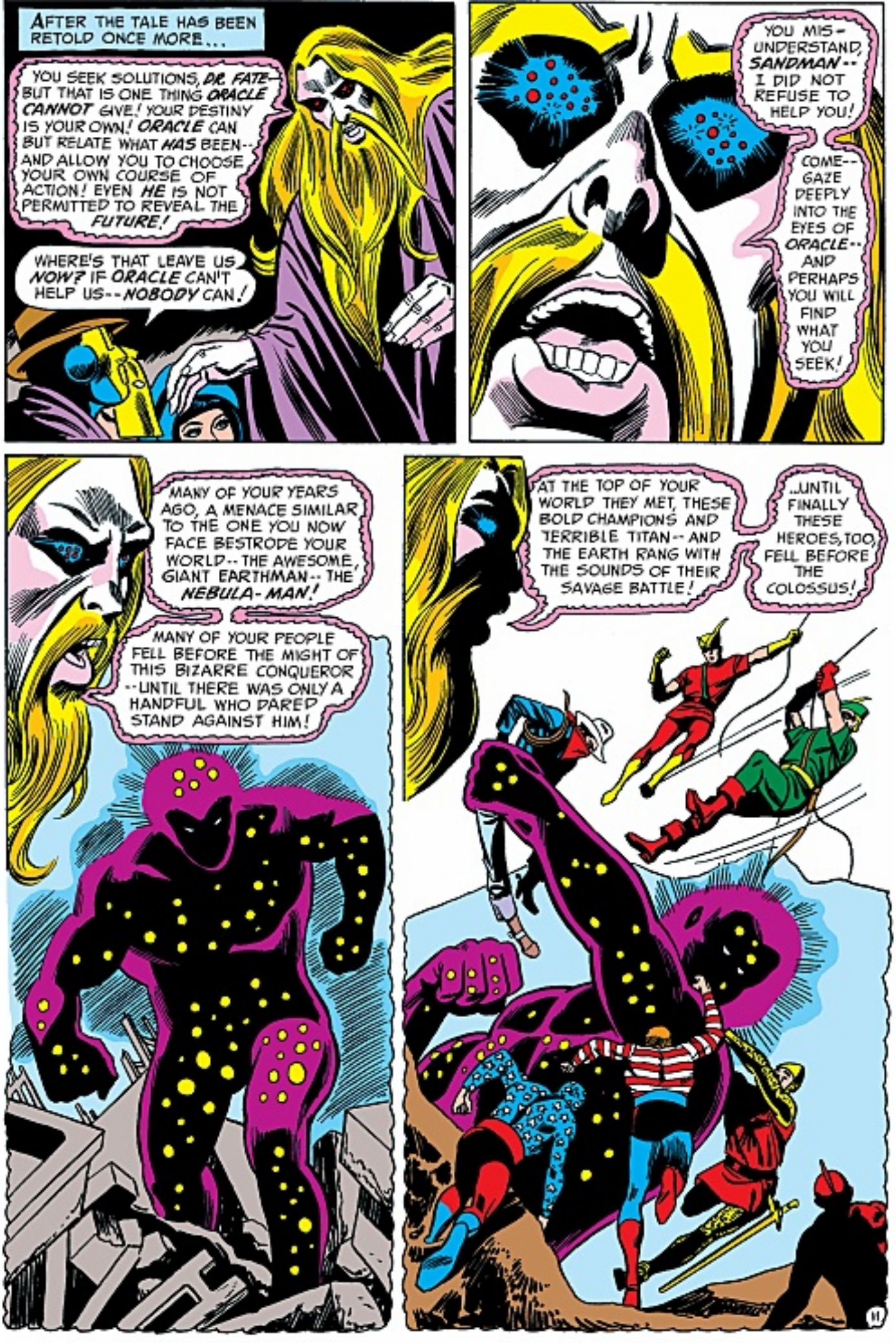

WHEN YOU HAVE A CAST-IRON STOMACH LIKE I DO, SWEETHEART--WHAT YOU PUT INTO IT DOESN'T MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE!
IF YOU'D LIKE, METAMORPHO, WE CAN SAVE THE CAKE-CUTTER FOR YOU!
TO YOU, IT WOULD PROBABLY TASTE DELICIOUS!
COME ON, GIRLS--LESS TALK AND MORE ACTION! I...I'M GROWING FAINT WITH HUNGER!
GREEN ARROW--YOU ARE GROWING FAINT--
--WE ALL ARE!
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO US?
ZATANNA'S FEARFUL QUESTION ECHOES OVER AND OVER THROUGH THE ROCK-HEWN HALLS--BUT THERE IS NOBODY LEFT TO ANSWER...
CLANGG
INSTEAD, THE HAPLESS HEROES FEEL THEMSELVES FALLING THROUGH A VOID--AND WHEN LIGHT FILLS THEIR EYES ONCE MORE...
WHERE ON EARTH ARE WE NOW?
YOU DON'T KNOW--? OH, THAT'S RIGHT! RALPH'S NEVER BEEN HERE BEFORE!
RALPH DIBNY--PERMIT ME TO INTRODUCE THE LEGENDARY JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA!
6

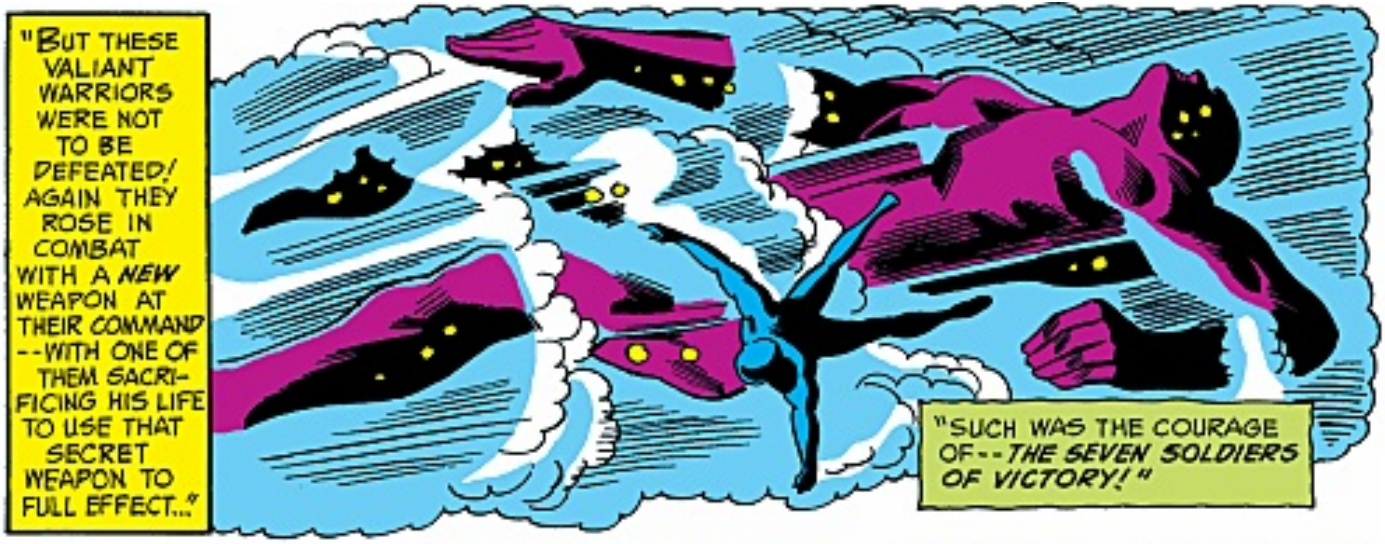

THE JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA--DYNAMIC DEFENDERS OF ANOTHER EARTH--BANDED TOGETHER IN THE CAUSE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS...
DOCTOR FATE--MYSTIC MASTER OF OCCULT AND ELDRITCH FORCES...
THE SANDMAN--GRIM CRUSADER WHO HAUNTS THE DREAMS OF THE LAWLESS...
JOHNNY THUNDER--MUDDLED MASTER OF THE MAGICAL BAHDNISIAN THUNDERBOLT...
WILDCAT--EX-HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION, WHO WIELDS HIS FISTS IN THE CAUSE OF JUSTICE...
THE RED TORNADO--FACELESS ANDROID WHIRLWIND...
STARMAN--MANIPULATOR OF THE AWESOME COSMIC ROD...
DOCTOR MID-NITE--BLIND BATTLER FOR HONOR AND TRUTH...
WONDER WOMAN--THE AMAZING AMAZON PRINCESS...
AND THE HOURMAN--WHOSE MIRACLO PILL GIVES HIM SUPER-CHARGED ENERGY FOR SIXTY FLEETING MINUTES...
AND AFTER THE PROPER SALUTATIONS HAVE BEEN EXCHANGED...
YOU PEOPLE LOOK LIKE YOU'VE BEEN DRAGGED THROUGH THE MUD! WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING 'ROUND HERE?
YES--WHY DID YOU BRING US TO EARTH-TWO* SO ABRUPTLY?
*EDITOR'S NOTE: AN ALMOST-DUPLICATE WORLD, OCCUPYING THE SAME SPACE AS OURS, BUT VIBRATING AT A DIFFERENT SPEED.
WE HAVE NEED OF HELP, AQUAMAN--THE SORT OF HELP ONLY YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES CAN GIVE!
COME--I WILL SHOW YOU WHAT I MEAN!
7


THE STELLAR SORCERER STRIDES SLOWLY TO THE CENTER OF THE CHAMBER--SILENTLY MUTTERING INCANTATIONS LONG THOUGHT FORGOTTEN--AND VISIONS BLOSSOM IN THE DUSTY AIR BEFORE HIM...
THIS IS WHY I BROUGHT YOU HERE, JUSTICE LEAGUE... THE REASON MY MYSTIC POWERS SNATCHED YOU FROM ACROSS THE DIMENSIONAL BARRIERS!
LOOK UPON THE HAND THAT HOLDS THE EARTH!
TWICE HAVE WE TRIED TO RELEASE THAT EVIL HAND'S GRIP UPON OUR WORLD--AND TWICE HAVE WE FAILED!
WE ARE IN SORE NEED OF HELP, MY FRIENDS! THAT IS WHY WE TURN TO YOU!
I'M NOT CERTAIN WE COULD FARE ANY BETTER, DR. FATE--UNLESS WE KNOW MORE ABOUT THAT HAND! WHAT'S IT MADE OF? WHERE'S IT COME FROM?
WE'RE STILL TRYING TO PUZZLE OUT THOSE SAME QUESTIONS, GREEN LANTERN! ALL WE DO KNOW IS--IT BELONGS TO A MENACE WHO CALLS HIMSELF THE IRON HAND!
HE HAS GIVEN US 48 HOURS TO TURN SUPREME DOMINATION OF EARTH OVER TO HIM...
...OR THAT FANTASTIC FIST WILL CLOSE--AND CRUSH OUR PLANET TO ATOMS!
8

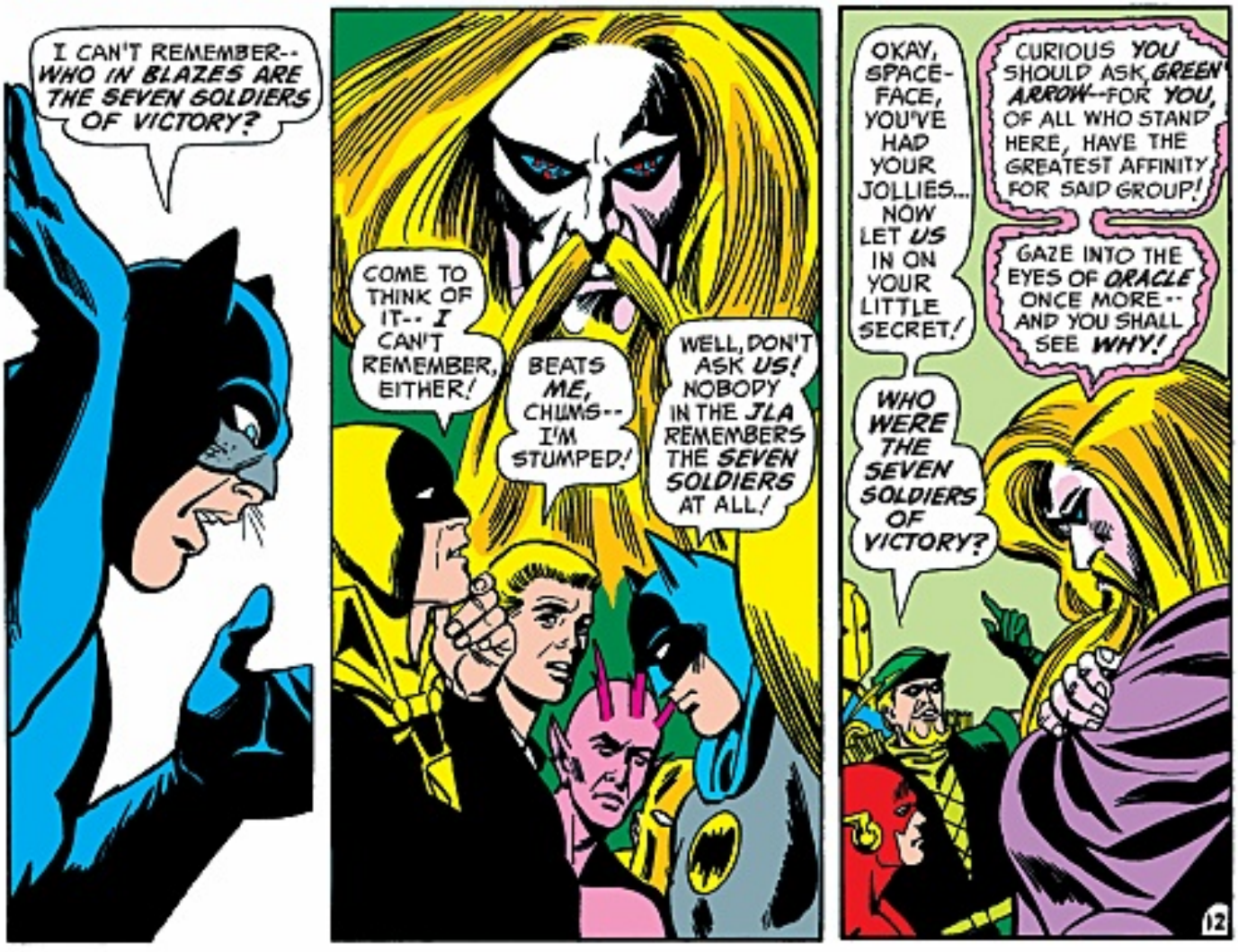

YOU SEE THEN OUR PREDICAMENT--WE ARE CONFRONTED BY QUESTIONS THAT CRY OUT FOR ANSWERS--BUT THERE ARE NONE TO BE HAD!
IN DESPERATION, I TURNED TO MY MYSTIC CRYSTAL IN HOPES OF SOLUTION...
...BUT THIS IS ALL THAT WAS REVEALED TO ME!
--A GRAVE?
THAT INSCRIPTION--WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
HERE ON HONORED SOIL RESTS AN UNKNOWN SOLDIER OF VICTORY WHO DIED THAT HIS WORLD MIGHT LIVE
AGAIN I KNOW NOT--I COULD PIERCE THE CRYSTAL-VEIL NO FARTHER!
BUT WITH YOUR PRESENCE HERE, ZATANNA, THE SCALES MAY AT LAST BE TIPPED IN OUR FAVOR!
M-ME? WHAT CAN I DO THAT DR. FATE CAN'T?
SOMEWHERE BEYOND THE MISTS OF TIME-AND-SPACE EXISTS THE ENTITY KNOWN AS ORACLE--FROM WHOM NO SECRETS ARE WITHHELD! MY OWN ABILITIES ARE NOT POTENT ENOUGH TO PENETRATE THE BARRIER--BUT...
...WERE WE TO ADD YOUR POWERS, ZATANNA--ALONG WITH THOSE OF JOHNNY THUNDER'S GENIE-LIKE SERVANT--TO MY OWN, WE MIGHT HAVE A CHANCE!
GOTCHA, DOC! OL' THUNDERBOLT'LL BE HERE IN TWO SHAKES!
SAY YOU!
AND, AMAZINGLY, AS JOHNNY THUNDER UTTERS THE ANCIENT BAHDNISIAN CHANT CEI-U (SAY YOU)...
YOU RANG, O MASTER OF THE MUDDLED AND MUNDANE?
T-BOLT! DOC FATE AND THE GANG NEED YOUR HELP!
THAT'S WHAT I'M HERE FOR, BRIGHT-EYES!
9


SOON, DARKNESS ENVELOPS THE ROOM, AN OVER-POWERING SHADOW TURNED AWAY ONLY BY THE GLOW OF BURNING EMBERS -- AND THE BLAZING VOICE OF DOCTOR FATE...
ORACLE -- YOU WHO WALK WITH WORLDS AS YOUR STEPPING-STONES -- HEAR MY WORDS! WE -- WHO SPEAK YOUR NAME IN THE MOST HUMBLE OF VOICES -- HAVE NEED OF YOU THIS DAY!
COME TO US, ORACLE -- WE BESEECH THEE! COME TO US!
THERE IS A SINGING IN THE STYGIAN GLOOM -- THE VIBRANT SOUND OF WORLDS LONG GONE AND GALAXIES JUST ABORNING -- THE WILLFUL HUM OF ETERNITY AS IT SKIMS ACROSS THE FABRIC OF THE COSMOS --
-- AND THEN THERE COMES A PRESENCE TO THE JUSTICE SOCIETY'S HIDDEN SANCTUM...
WHO DARES CALL ORACLE FROM THE REALM BEYOND?
I DARE, ORACLE! I -- DOCTOR FATE -- WHO ASK NO MORE THAN A MOMENT'S INDULGENCE FROM ONE AS OMNIPOTENT AS YOU!
A MOMENT CAN BE AN ETERNITY TO SOME, IMPUDENT ONE -- BUT THE NAME OF DOCTOR FATE HAS REACHED MY EARS OFTEN, AND NAUGHT BUT GOOD HAS BEEN SAID!
SO SPEAK WHAT YOU WILL -- AND ORACLE WILL LISTEN!
10

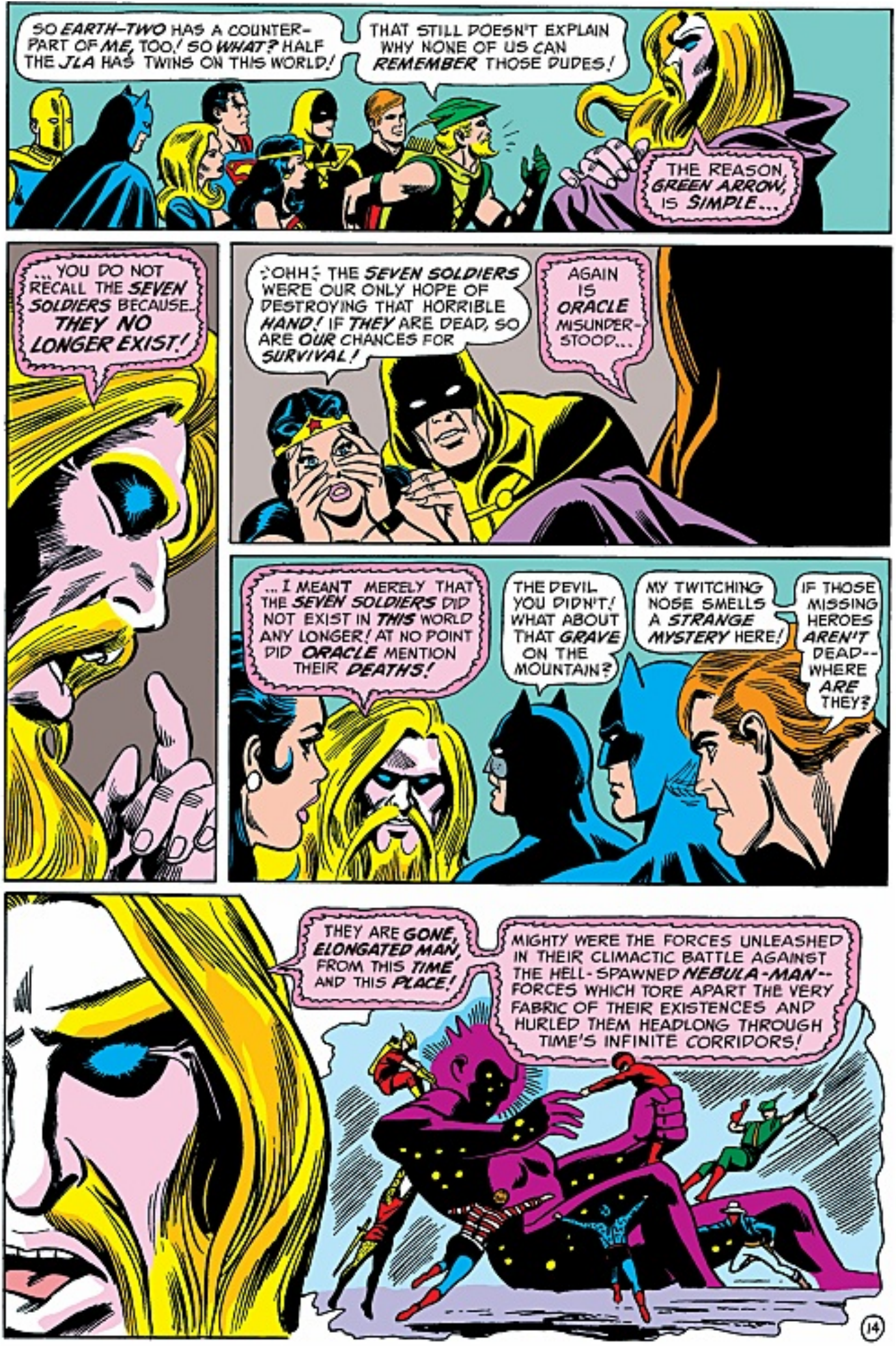

AFTER THE TALE HAS BEEN RETOLD ONCE MORE...
YOU SEEK SOLUTIONS, DR. FATE— BUT THAT IS ONE THING ORACLE CANNOT GIVE! YOUR DESTINY IS YOUR OWN! ORACLE CAN BUT RELATE WHAT HAS BEEN-- AND ALLOW YOU TO CHOOSE YOUR OWN COURSE OF ACTION! EVEN HE IS NOT PERMITTED TO REVEAL THE FUTURE!
WHERE'S THAT LEAVE US NOW? IF ORACLE CAN'T HELP US--NOBODY CAN!
YOU MIS-UNDERSTAND, SANDMAN-- I DID NOT REFUSE TO HELP YOU!
COME-- GAZE DEEPLY INTO THE EYES OF ORACLE-- AND PERHAPS YOU WILL FIND WHAT YOU SEEK!
MANY OF YOUR YEARS AGO, A MENACE SIMILAR TO THE ONE YOU NOW FACE BESTRODE YOUR WORLD-- THE AWESOME, GIANT EARTHMAN-- THE NEBULA-MAN!
MANY OF YOUR PEOPLE FELL BEFORE THE MIGHT OF THIS BIZARRE CONQUEROR --UNTIL THERE WAS ONLY A HANDFUL WHO DARED STAND AGAINST HIM!
AT THE TOP OF YOUR WORLD THEY MET, THESE BOLD CHAMPIONS AND TERRIBLE TITAN-- AND THE EARTH RANG WITH THE SOUNDS OF THEIR SAVAGE BATTLE!
..UNTIL FINALLY THESE HEROES, TOO, FELL BEFORE THE COLOSSUS!
11

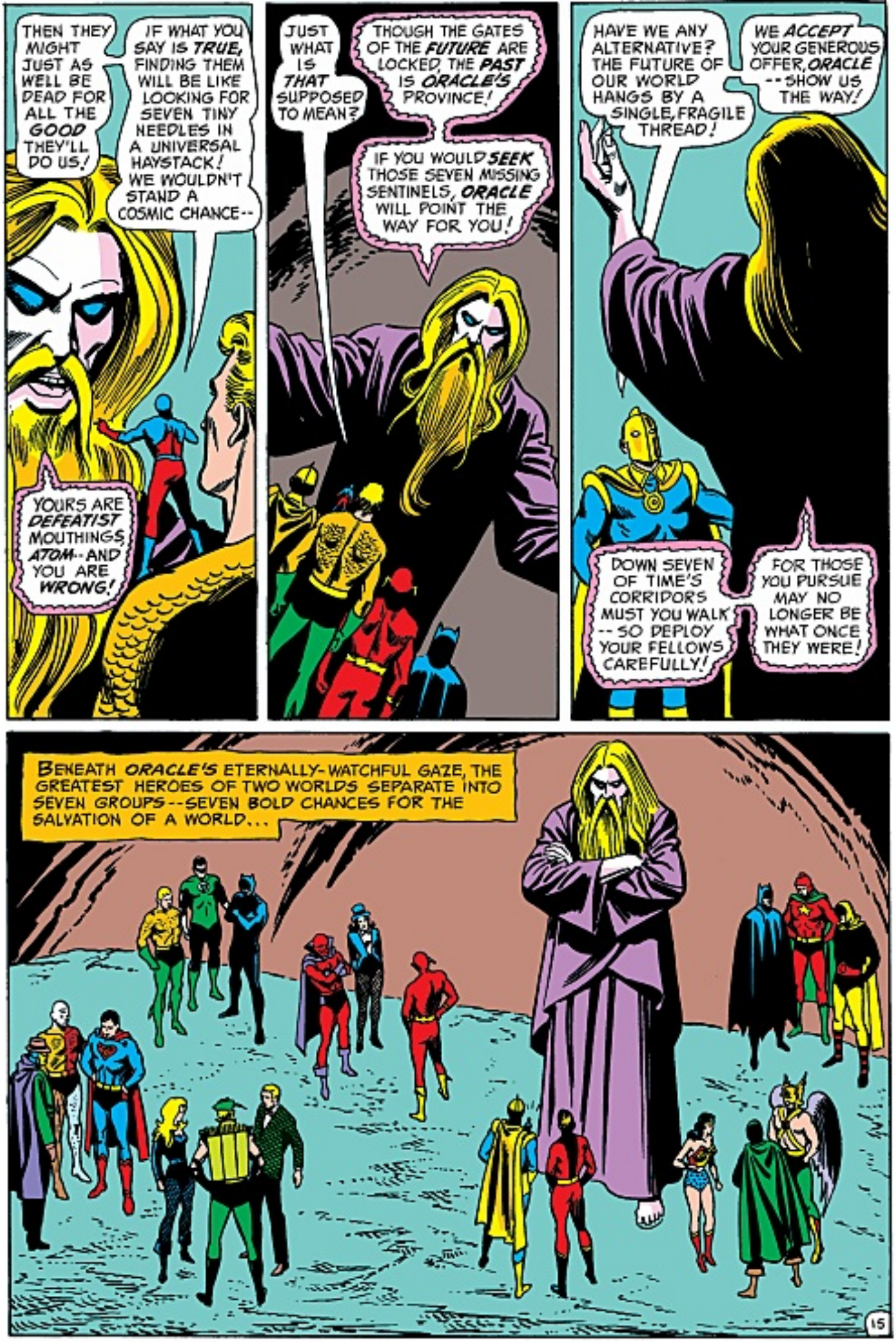

"BUT THESE VALIANT WARRIORS WERE NOT TO BE DEFEATED! AGAIN THEY ROSE IN COMBAT WITH A NEW WEAPON AT THEIR COMMAND --WITH ONE OF THEM SACRIFICING HIS LIFE TO USE THAT SECRET WEAPON TO FULL EFFECT..."
"SUCH WAS THE COURAGE OF--THE SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY!"

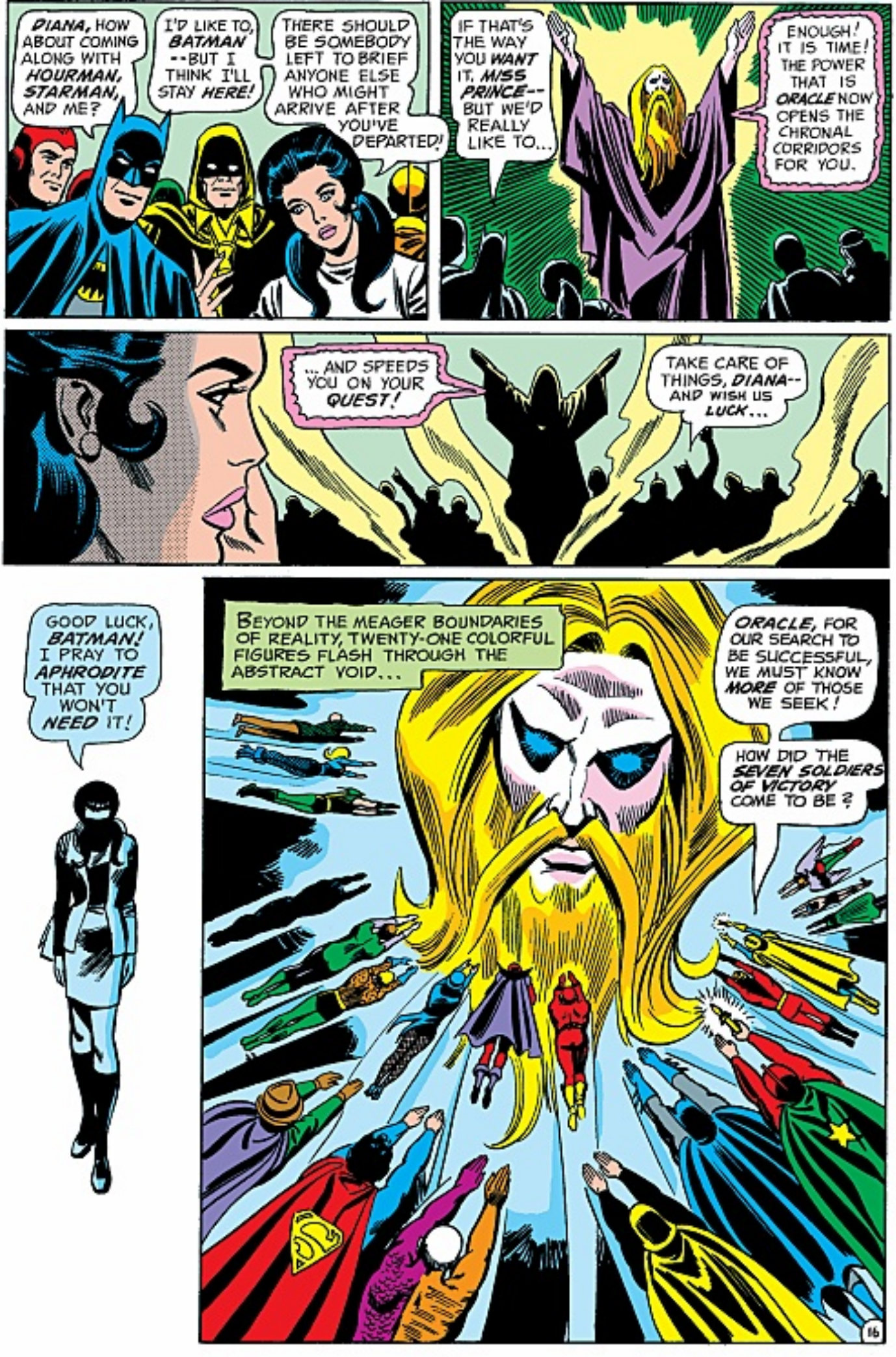
THEN THAT EXPLAINS THE GRAVE! THE DEAD SOLDIER OF VICTORY IS BURIED THERE!
SURE--THE SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY! WE SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF 'EM SOONER! THEY...THEY...
HEY, WAIT A SECOND! THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG HERE!


I CAN'T REMEMBER--WHO IN BLAZES ARE THE SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY?
COME TO THINK OF IT-- I CAN'T REMEMBER, EITHER!
BEATS ME, CHUMS-- I'M STUMPED!
WELL, DON'T ASK US! NOBODY IN THE JLA REMEMBERS THE SEVEN SOLDIERS AT ALL!
OKAY, SPACE-FACE, YOU'VE HAD YOUR JOLLIES... NOW LET US IN ON YOUR LITTLE SECRET!
CURIOUS YOU SHOULD ASK, GREEN ARROW--FOR YOU, OF ALL WHO STAND HERE, HAVE THE GREATEST AFFINITY FOR SAID GROUP!
GAZE INTO THE EYES OF ORACLE ONCE MORE-- AND YOU SHALL SEE WHY!
WHO WERE THE SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY?
12

THE SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY WERE NOT UNLIKE YOURSELVES -- BOLD ADVENTURERS GATHERED TOGETHER IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM...
THE VIGILANTE -- IN REALITY, GREG SANDERS, THE "PRAIRIE TROUBADOUR" -- WHO FOUGHT CRIMES OF THE CITY WITH THE WEAPONS OF THE PLAINS...
THE STAR-SPANGLED KID AND STRIPESY -- ACTUALLY, WEALTHY YOUNG SYLVESTER PEMBERTON AND HIS BODYGUARD-CHAUFFEUR PAT DUGAN -- WHO BATTLED INJUSTICE IN THE ASTONISHING STAR-ROCKET-RACER...
SIR JUSTIN, THE SHINING KNIGHT -- TIME-TOSSED PALADIN OF KING ARTHUR'S COURT -- WHO RODE THE FLYING STEED, WINGED VICTORY, AGAINST THE FORCES OF CORRUPTION...
THE CRIMSON AVENGER -- CRUSADING NEWSPAPER PUBLISHER LEE TRAVIS -- WHO, WITH THE HELP OF HIS ORIENTAL AIDE, WING, CARRIED HIS CAMPAIGN OF CRIME-PREVENTION INTO THE UNDERWORLD'S DARKEST HOLDS...
THE GREEN ARROW AND SPEEDY -- MILLIONAIRE FINANCIER OLIVER QUEEN AND HIS YOUNG WARD, ROY HARPER -- WHO BENT THEIR LONGBOWS TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT FROM THE GRASPING CLAW OF EVIL...
13

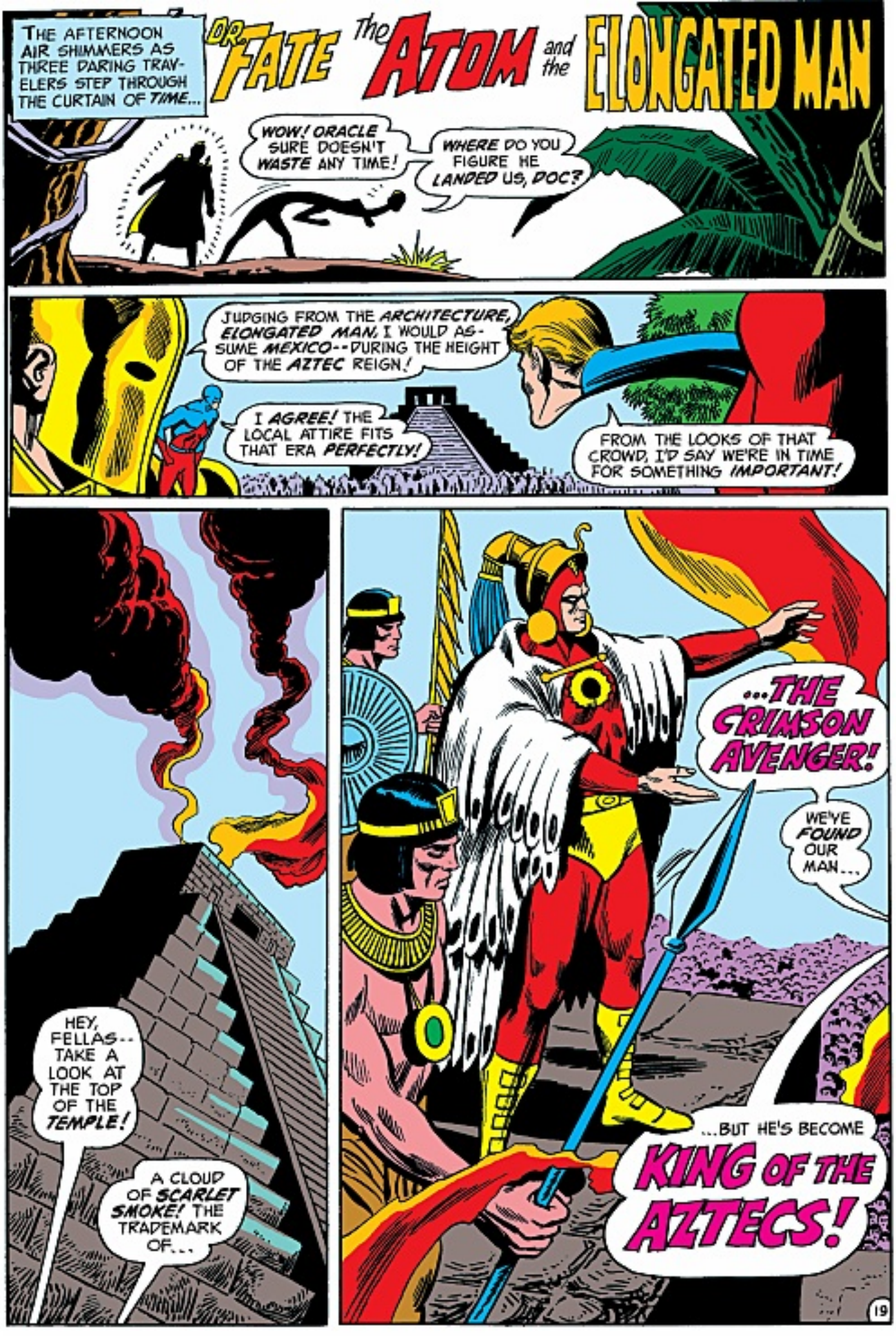

SO EARTH-TWO HAS A COUNTER-PART OF ME, TOO! SO WHAT? HALF THE JLA HAS TWINS ON THIS WORLD!
THAT STILL DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHY NONE OF US CAN REMEMBER THOSE DUDES!
THE REASON, GREEN ARROW, IS SIMPLE...
...YOU DO NOT RECALL THE SEVEN SOLDIERS BECAUSE... THEY NO LONGER EXIST!
OHH! THE SEVEN SOLDIERS WERE OUR ONLY HOPE OF DESTROYING THAT HORRIBLE HAND! IF THEY ARE DEAD, SO ARE OUR CHANCES FOR SURVIVAL!
AGAIN IS ORACLE MISUNDER-STOOD...
...I MEANT MERELY THAT THE SEVEN SOLDIERS DID NOT EXIST IN THIS WORLD ANY LONGER! AT NO POINT DID ORACLE MENTION THEIR DEATHS!
THE DEVIL YOU DIDN'T! WHAT ABOUT THAT GRAVE ON THE MOUNTAIN?
MY TWITCHING NOSE SMELLS A STRANGE MYSTERY HERE!
IF THOSE MISSING HEROES AREN'T DEAD--WHERE ARE THEY?
THEY ARE GONE, ELONGATED MAN, FROM THIS TIME AND THIS PLACE!
MIGHTY WERE THE FORCES UNLEASHED IN THEIR CLIMACTIC BATTLE AGAINST THE HELL-SPAWNED NEBULA-MAN--FORCES WHICH TORE APART THE VERY FABRIC OF THEIR EXISTENCES AND HURLED THEM HEADLONG THROUGH TIME'S INFINITE CORRIDORS!
14


THEN THEY MIGHT JUST AS WELL BE DEAD FOR ALL THE GOOD THEY'LL DO US!
IF WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE, FINDING THEM WILL BE LIKE LOOKING FOR SEVEN TINY NEEDLES IN A UNIVERSAL HAYSTACK! WE WOULDN'T STAND A COSMIC CHANCE--
YOURS ARE DEFEATIST MOUTHINGS, ATOM--AND YOU ARE WRONG!
JUST WHAT IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
THOUGH THE GATES OF THE FUTURE ARE LOCKED, THE PAST IS ORACLE'S PROVINCE!
IF YOU WOULD SEEK THOSE SEVEN MISSING SENTINELS, ORACLE WILL POINT THE WAY FOR YOU!
HAVE WE ANY ALTERNATIVE? THE FUTURE OF OUR WORLD HANGS BY A SINGLE, FRAGILE THREAD!
WE ACCEPT YOUR GENEROUS OFFER, ORACLE --SHOW US THE WAY!
DOWN SEVEN OF TIME'S CORRIDORS MUST YOU WALK --SO DEPLOY YOUR FELLOWS CAREFULLY!
FOR THOSE YOU PURSUE MAY NO LONGER BE WHAT ONCE THEY WERE!
BENEATH ORACLE'S ETERNALLY-WATCHFUL GAZE, THE GREATEST HEROES OF TWO WORLDS SEPARATE INTO SEVEN GROUPS--SEVEN BOLD CHANCES FOR THE SALVATION OF A WORLD...
15


DIANA, HOW ABOUT COMING ALONG WITH HOURMAN, STARMAN, AND ME?
I'D LIKE TO, BATMAN --BUT I THINK I'LL STAY HERE!
THERE SHOULD BE SOMEBODY LEFT TO BRIEF ANYONE ELSE WHO MIGHT ARRIVE AFTER YOU'VE DEPARTED!
IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU WANT IT, MISS PRINCE-- BUT WE'D REALLY LIKE TO...
ENOUGH! IT IS TIME! THE POWER THAT IS ORACLE NOW OPENS THE CHRONAL CORRIDORS FOR YOU.
... AND SPEEDS YOU ON YOUR QUEST!
TAKE CARE OF THINGS, DIANA-- AND WISH US LUCK...
GOOD LUCK, BATMAN! I PRAY TO APHRODITE THAT YOU WON'T NEED IT!
BEYOND THE MEAGER BOUNDARIES OF REALITY, TWENTY-ONE COLORFUL FIGURES FLASH THROUGH THE ABSTRACT VOID...
ORACLE, FOR OUR SEARCH TO BE SUCCESSFUL, WE MUST KNOW MORE OF THOSE WE SEEK!
HOW DID THE SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY COME TO BE?
16

TURN YOUR MINDS BACK THROUGH THE YEARS--TO A TIME BEFORE THE SEVEN YOU SEEK HAD MET--
--BACK TO THE HIDDEN SANCTUARY OF THE ARCH-VILLAIN WHO THEN WAS CALLED ONLY--THE HAND!
"TURN BACK TO A TIME WHEN THIS MASTER-MANIPULATOR HAD GATHERED UNTO HIM THE FIVE GREATEST MENACES YOUR WORLD HAD THEN KNOWN..."
THEY TELL ME I'M GOING TO DIE--WHICH IS WHY I'VE BROUGHT YOU HERE! THE HAND WILL NOT DIE UNREMEMBERED!
YOU FIVE WILL COMMIT HISTORY'S GREATEST CRIMES AT MY COMMAND--AND ALL THE LAWMEN IN THE WORLD WON'T BE ABLE TO STOP YOU!
"BUT THE HAND WAS INCORRECT--FOR GREEN ARROW AND SPEEDY MET THE MALEVOLENT PROFESSOR MERLIN AND HIS MINIONS IN BLISTERING DEATH VALLEY--"
"--STOPPING THE THEFT OF A A FABULOUS GOLD MINE..."
"THE AGILE STAR-SPANGLED KID AND STRIPESY BATTLED THEIR OLD FOE THE NEEDLE IN THE PANAMA CANAL ZONE--TO PROTECT A SCIENTIST AND HIS VITAL RAY DEVICE..."
"THE SHINING KNIGHT FLEW TO THE HIDDEN WAMONA VALLEY--TO PROTECT ITS SIMPLE, GENTLE INHABITANTS AND THEIR TREASURE FROM THE SINISTER RED DRAGON..."
17

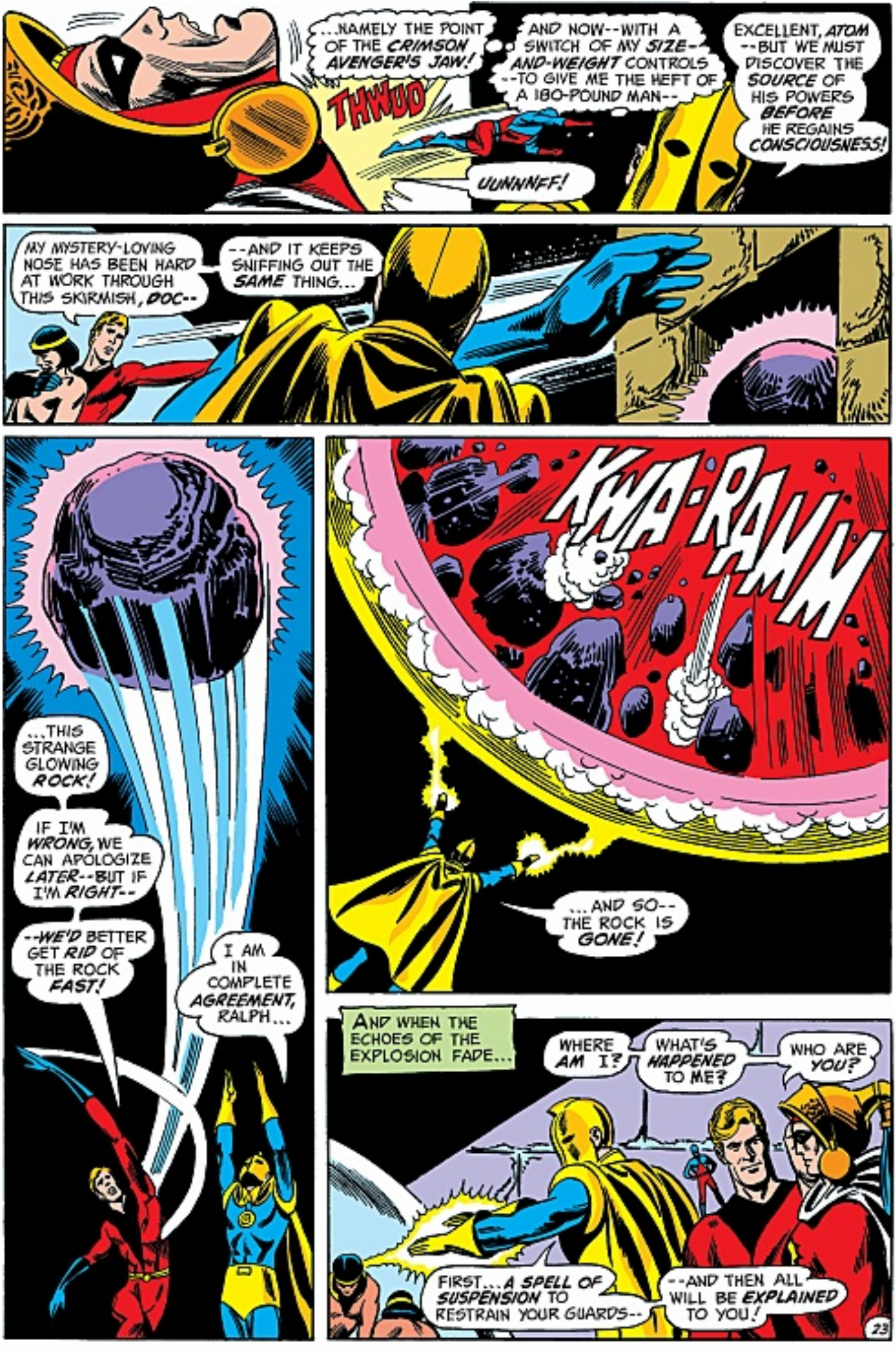
"THE CRIMSON AVENGER AND HIS ORIENTAL AIDE, WING, JOURNEYED TO TEEMING TIMES SQUARE--"
"--TO STOP VICIOUS BIG CAESAR FROM CAUSING A POWER BLACKOUT THAT WOULD LEAVE NEW YORK CITY OPEN TO MASS ROBBERY..."
"AND THE VIGILANTE RACED TO HOLLYWOOD--TO SMASH A BIZARRE BLACKMAIL PLOT DEVISED BY THE DIABOLICAL DUMMY..."
"AT LAST, THE WINDING PATHS OF THOSE SEVEN BRAVE SENTINELS LED THEM TO THE HIDEAWAY OF THE HAND HIMSELF--AND INTO THE CENTER OF AN ELECTRONIC TRAP..."
"BUT A WELL-PLACED BULLET FROM THE VIGILANTE SEVERED THE WEAPON'S SUPPORTS--AND ENDED THE HAND'S CRIMINAL CAREER--SEEMINGLY FOREVER..."
SO WELL DID THEY MESH TO DEFEAT THAT MONUMENTAL MENACE THAT THEY BANDED TOGETHER AT THE SHINING KNIGHT'S SUGGESTION--TO BECOME THE SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY!
AN AMAZING STORY, ORACLE--BUT TELL US MORE OF THE HAND!
WHY DID YOU SAY ONLY "SEEMINGLY" FOREVER?
ALL WILL BE REVEALED TO YOU IN TIME!
BUT NOW, ORACLE MUST SPEED YOU TO YOUR POINTS OF RENDEZVOUS --
--FOR THE QUEST HAS BEGUN!
18


THE AFTERNOON AIR SHIMMERS AS THREE DARING TRAVELERS STEP THROUGH THE CURTAIN OF TIME...
DR. FATE
The ATOM
and the
ELONGATED MAN
WOW! ORACLE SURE DOESN'T WASTE ANY TIME!
WHERE DO YOU FIGURE HE LANDED US, DOC?
JUDGING FROM THE ARCHITECTURE, ELONGATED MAN, I WOULD ASSUME MEXICO--DURING THE HEIGHT OF THE AZTEC REIGN!
I AGREE! THE LOCAL ATTIRE FITS THAT ERA PERFECTLY!
FROM THE LOOKS OF THAT CROWD, I'D SAY WE'RE IN TIME FOR SOMETHING IMPORTANT!
HEY, FELLAS--TAKE A LOOK AT THE TOP OF THE TEMPLE!
A CLOUD OF SCARLET SMOKE! THE TRADEMARK OF...
...THE CRIMSON AVENGER!
WE'VE FOUND OUR MAN...
...BUT HE'S BECOME KING OF THE AZTECS!
19

A SHORT WHILE LATER--WHEN THE TUMULTUOUS CROWD HAS FINALLY DISPERSED...
TREAD SOFTLY, FRIENDS!
WE'D BEST FOLLOW OUR CRIMSON QUARRY AND HIS COMPANIONS TO QUIETER QUARTERS--
--BEFORE WE TAKE ANY ACTION!
I'M WAY AHEAD OF YOU, DOC!
CAUTIOUSLY, THE COSTUMED TRIO APPROACHES THE GREAT EDIFICE--DOCTOR FATE MOUTHS A MYSTIC CHANT AND...
A TERRIFIC OPENING, DOC--BUT IT'LL NEVER REPLACE THE DOOR!
THIS IS NO TIME FOR HUMOR, MR. DIBNY! THE CRIMSON AVENGER IS WELL-GUARDED!
WE'D BETTER ATTRACT HIS ATTENTION!
AND MOMENTS LATER...
PSST--AVENGER!--KEEP QUIET!
WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU ESCAPE!
WHAT--? INTRUDERS!
GUARDS, COME QUICKLY--QUICKLY!
SOMETHING TELLS ME WE MADE A BOO-BOO!
LET'S GET THE HECK OUTA HERE!
YOU WILL BE GOING NOWHERE, STRANGE ONES--TILL YOU ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS!
ZZZZZZZ
UUNNNHH!
20

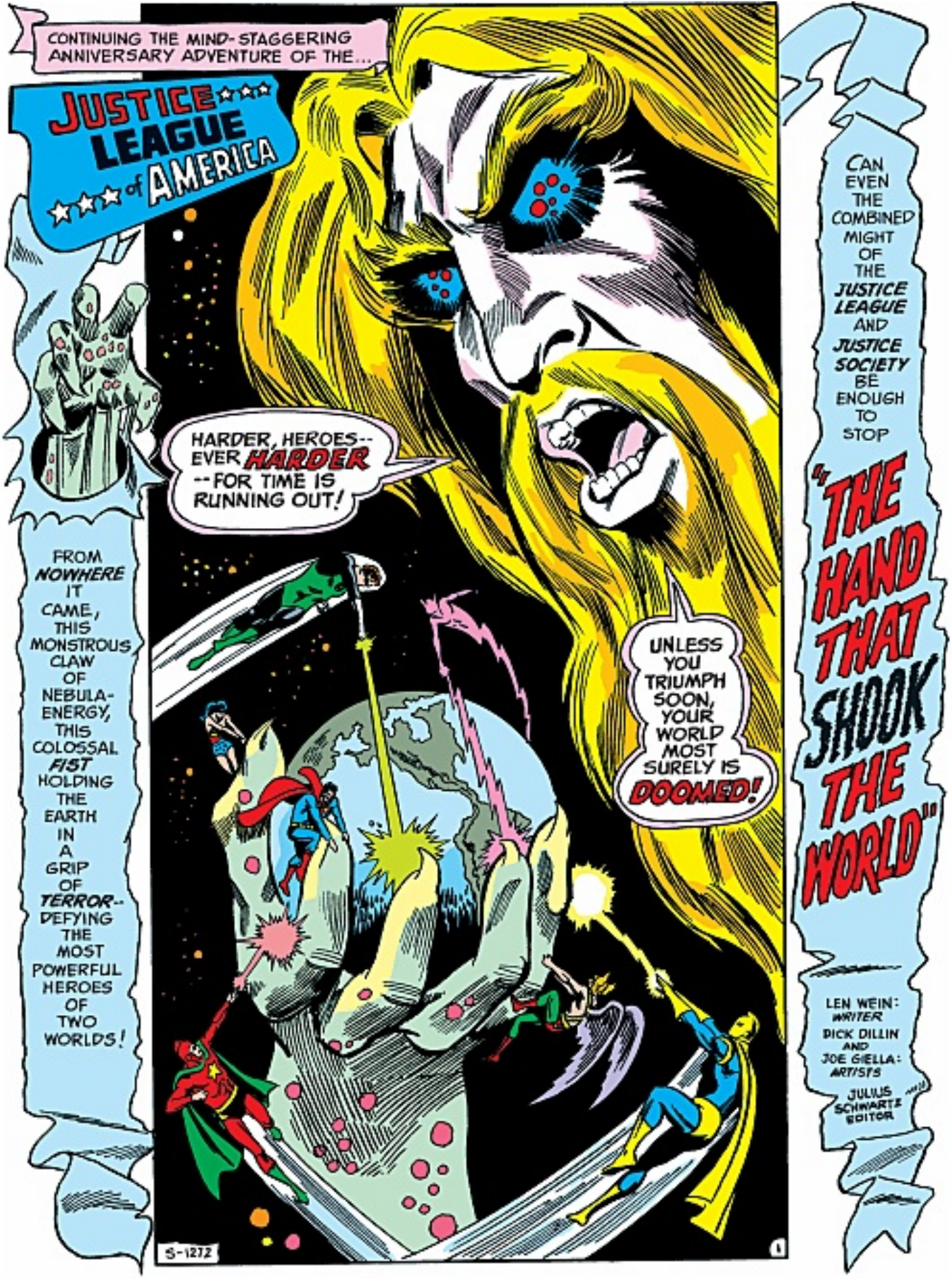
WHEN THE SOLDIERS THREE COME TO...
WHAT DID THE CRIMSON AVENGER HIT US WITH--?
I FEEL LIKE A STRETCHED-OUT RUBBER BAND!
MY CONDITION IS NOT UNLIKE YOURS, FRIEND DIBNY--AND THESE CHAINS DO LITTLE TO EASE THE DISCOMFORT!
IS THE ATOM AWAKE YET?
SPRY AS A SPRING, DOC! I'M SO SMALL THE AVENGER AND HIS GOONS DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE ME!
SO, PRISONERS--YOU ARE AWAKE AT LAST!
WHO SENT YOU TO SPY ON HUITZILOPOCHTLI, THE SUN GOD?
SUN GOD? YOU'RE NO SUN GOD!
YOU'RE THE CRIMSON AVENGER--A HERO WE'VE JOURNEYED THROUGH THE CENTURIES TO FIND!
I AM A GOD! WHO ELSE COULD WIELD SUCH POWER?
--THE POWER GIVEN ME WHEN I FELL FROM OUT THE SKY!
APPARENTLY, MY FRIEND--YOU'RE SUFFERING FROM DELUSIONS!..
A CONDITION EASILY CURED ONCE WE GET YOU AWAY FROM THIS TIME!
WHAT SORCERY--? THEY FREE THEMSELVES!
GUARDS! GUARDS!
21

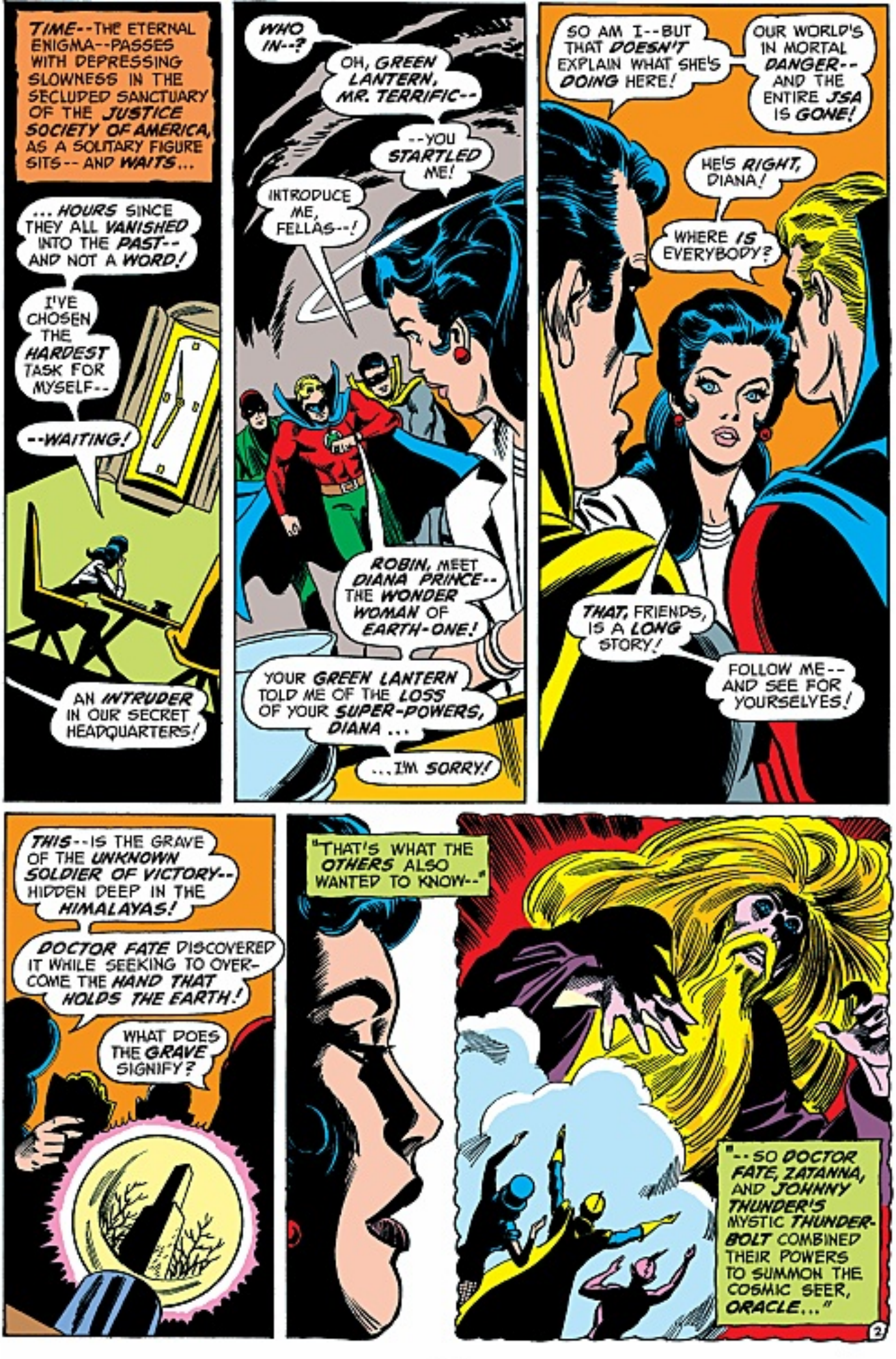
I WILL NOT BE SO LENIENT AGAIN! THIS TIME I WILL TURN YOU TO ASHES!
FORGIVE ME, MY FRIEND...
...BUT THIS TIME I FEAR I CANNOT COOPERATE SO READILY!
RASH INTRUDERS! YOU ARE DOOMED!
WHEREVER HIS POWERS STEM FROM, THEY ARE AWESOME!
I BARELY MANAGE TO MAINTAIN MY GROUND!
I'D SAY YOU GUYS HAD BEEN WATCHING TOO MANY OLD PETER LORRE MOVIES--
--EXCEPT FOR THE FACT THEY HAVEN'T INVENTED TELEVISION YET!
OOF!
UGH!
UNNH!
E-MAN IS HOLDING HIS OWN--BUT IT LOOKS LIKE DOC FATE IS IN TROUBLE!
I'D BETTER LEND MY "TINY TALENTS" TO THE GOOD DOCTOR--WHILE THERE'S STILL TIME!
THAT'S ASSUMING I DON'T GET STEPPED ON IN THE PROCESS!
WHEW!--MADE IT!
THIS SWINGING SPEAR SHAFT'LL MAKE A DANDY LITTLE CATAPULT--TO SEND ME TO THE POINT OF THE MATTER...
22


...NAMELY THE POINT OF THE CRIMSON AVENGER'S JAW!
THWUD
AND NOW--WITH A SWITCH OF MY SIZE-AND-WEIGHT CONTROLS --TO GIVE ME THE HEFT OF A 180-POUND MAN--
UUNNNFF!
EXCELLENT, ATOM --BUT WE MUST DISCOVER THE SOURCE OF HIS POWERS BEFORE HE REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS!
MY MYSTERY-LOVING NOSE HAS BEEN HARD AT WORK THROUGH THIS SKIRMISH, DOC--
--AND IT KEEPS SNIFFING OUT THE SAME THING...
...THIS STRANGE GLOWING ROCK!
IF I'M WRONG, WE CAN APOLOGIZE LATER--BUT IF I'M RIGHT--
--WE'D BETTER GET RID OF THE ROCK FAST!
I AM IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT, RALPH...
KWA-RAM
...AND SO-- THE ROCK IS GONE!
AND WHEN THE ECHOES OF THE EXPLOSION FADE...
WHERE AM I?
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ME?
WHO ARE YOU?
FIRST... A SPELL OF SUSPENSION TO RESTRAIN YOUR GUARDS--
--AND THEN ALL WILL BE EXPLAINED TO YOU!
23

AFTER EXPLANATIONS ARE MADE...
A FANTASTIC STORY! APPARENTLY WHEN I WAS HURLED THROUGH TIME, A CHUCK OF THE SHATTERED NEBULA-MAN WAS THROWN ALONG WITH ME--
--STEALING MY MEMORY-- AND IMBUING ME WITH THE POWERS YOU DESCRIBE!
SUDDENLY...
THAT SMOKE--! IT'S NOT CRIMSON LIKE MY OWN!
WHAT IS IT?
UNLESS I AM MISTAKEN, AVENGER-- IT IS OUR PASSPORT TO THE FUTURE!
ORACLE IS BRINGING US HOME!
YEAH--BUT IS HE BRINGING US HOME--IN TIME?
AND IN A DARKENED LABORATORY IN ANOTHER PLANE OF EXISTENCE, THERE IS ANOTHER WHOSE THOUGHTS ARE CONCERNED WITH TIME...
THEY MOVE SO SLOWLY, THE HANDS OF THE CLOCK-- ALMOST AS IF THEY WERE TAUNTING ME--
--TELLING ME I WILL NOT SUCCEED!
BUT THEY ARE WRONG-- DEAD WRONG!
THE EARTH WILL BOW BEFORE MY DEMANDS--
--AND THE IRON HAND WILL HOLD DOMINION OVER ALL!
NEXT ISSUE:
"THE HAND THAT SHOOK THE WORLD!"
24
THE END

Cover for **JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA #101** (1972)
Art by Nick Cardy

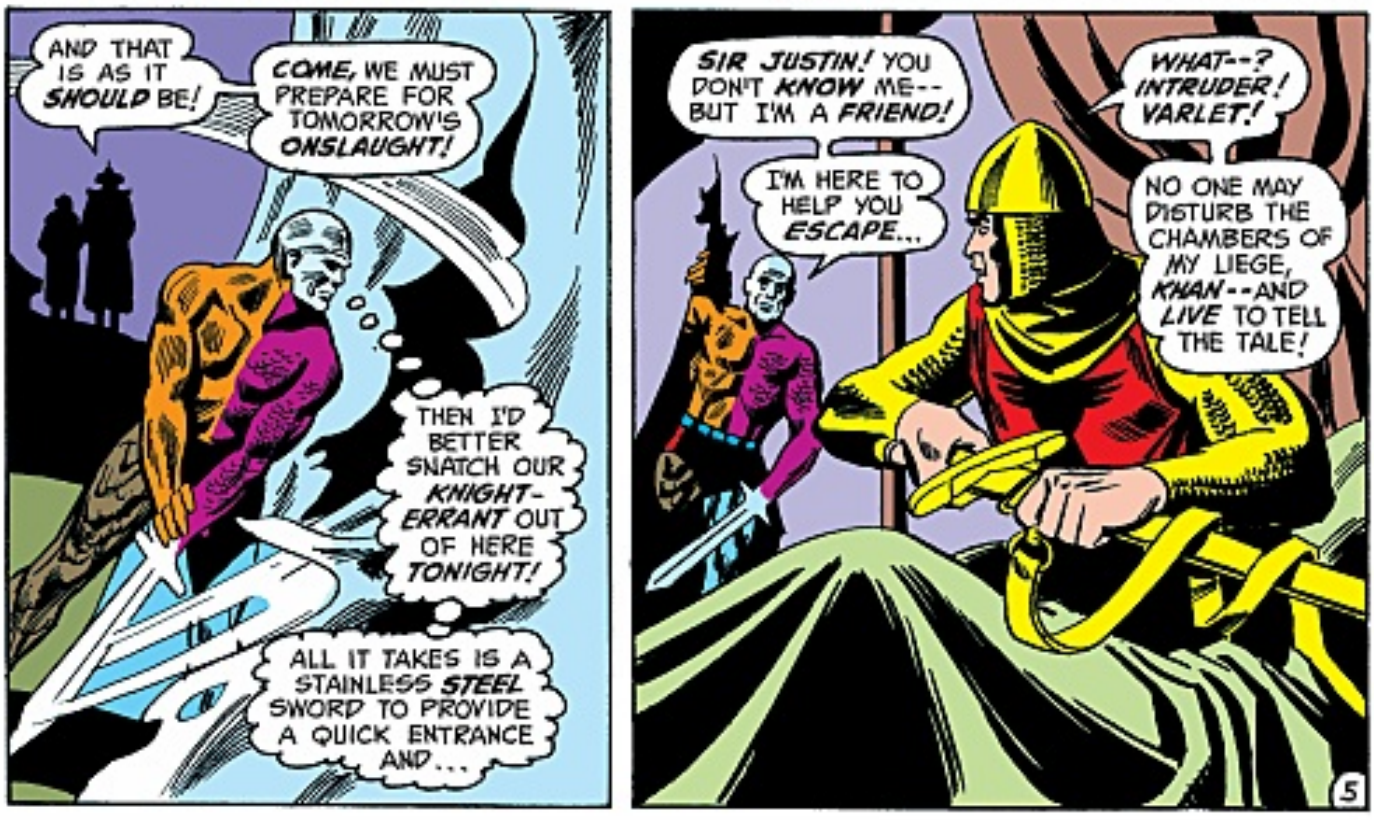

CONTINUING THE MIND-STAGGERING ANNIVERSARY ADVENTURE OF THE...
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
FROM NOWHERE IT CAME, THIS MONSTROUS CLAW OF NEBULA-ENERGY, THIS COLOSSAL FIST HOLDING THE EARTH IN A GRIP OF TERROR--DEFYING THE MOST POWERFUL HEROES OF TWO WORLDS!
HARDER, HEROES--EVER HARDER --FOR TIME IS RUNNING OUT!
UNLESS YOU TRIUMPH SOON, YOUR WORLD MOST SURELY IS DOOMED!
CAN EVEN THE COMBINED MIGHT OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE AND JUSTICE SOCIETY BE ENOUGH TO STOP
"THE HAND THAT SHOOK THE WORLD"
LEN WEIN: WRITER
DICK DILLIN AND JOE GIELLA: ARTISTS
JULIUS SCHWARTZ EDITOR
S-1272
1


TIME--THE ETERNAL ENIGMA--PASSES WITH DEPRESSING SLOWNESS IN THE SECLUDED SANCTUARY OF THE JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA, AS A SOLITARY FIGURE SITS-- AND WAITS...
... HOURS SINCE THEY ALL VANISHED INTO THE PAST-- AND NOT A WORD!
I'VE CHOSEN THE HARDEST TASK FOR MYSELF--
--WAITING!
AN INTRUDER IN OUR SECRET HEADQUARTERS!
WHO IN--?
OH, GREEN LANTERN, MR. TERRIFIC--
--YOU STARTLED ME!
INTRODUCE ME, FELLAS--!
ROBIN, MEET DIANA PRINCE-- THE WONDER WOMAN OF EARTH-ONE!
YOUR GREEN LANTERN TOLD ME OF THE LOSS OF YOUR SUPER-POWERS, DIANA ...
...I'M SORRY!
SO AM I--BUT THAT DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHAT SHE'S DOING HERE!
OUR WORLD'S IN MORTAL DANGER-- AND THE ENTIRE JSA IS GONE!
HE'S RIGHT, DIANA!
WHERE IS EVERYBODY?
THAT, FRIENDS, IS A LONG STORY!
FOLLOW ME-- AND SEE FOR YOURSELVES!
THIS--IS THE GRAVE OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER OF VICTORY-- HIDDEN DEEP IN THE HIMALAYAS!
DOCTOR FATE DISCOVERED IT WHILE SEEKING TO OVERCOME THE HAND THAT HOLDS THE EARTH!
WHAT DOES THE GRAVE SIGNIFY?
"THAT'S WHAT THE OTHERS ALSO WANTED TO KNOW--"
"--SO DOCTOR FATE, ZATANNA, AND JOHNNY THUNDER'S MYSTIC THUNDERBOLT COMBINED THEIR POWERS TO SUMMON THE COSMIC SEER, ORACLE..."
2

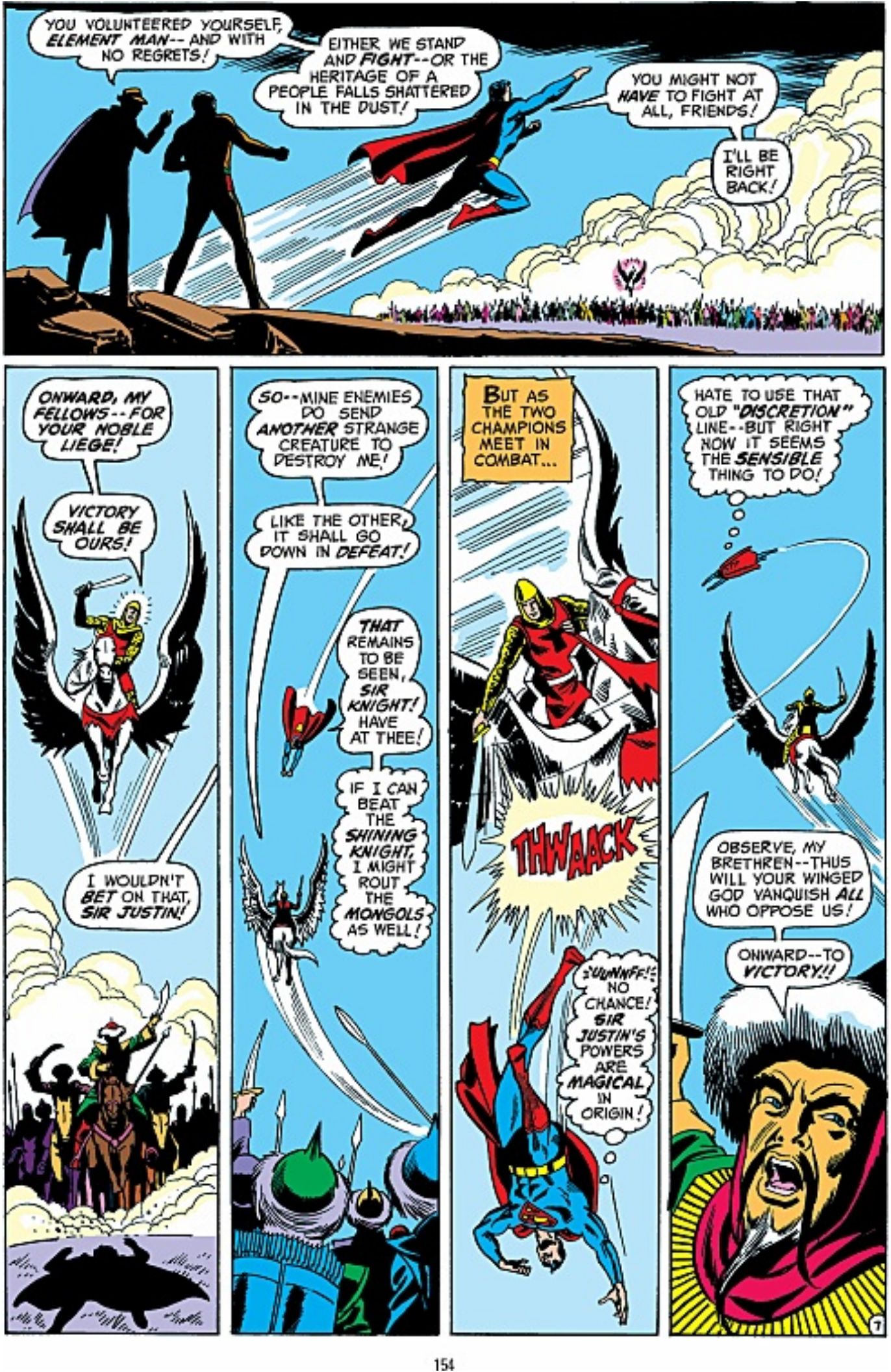
"ORACLE REVEALED THE GRAVE WAS A RESULT OF A TREMENDOUS BATTLE THAT HAD OCCURRED THERE YEARS BEFORE..."
"... A BATTLE BETWEEN THE TITANIC NEBULA-MAN AND THE SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY..."
WHO IN BLAZES ARE THE SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY?
I NEVER HEARD OF THEM!
I'M OLDER THAN YOU ARE, ROBIN-- BUT I'LL BE DARNED IF I CAN REMEMBER THEM EITHER!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH OUR MEMORIES?
ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!
NOBODY ON EARTH REMEMBERS THE SEVEN SOLDIERS-- BECAUSE A TIME-WARP CREATED BY THE NEBULA-MAN'S DESTRUCTION HURLED THEM BACK THROUGH THE AGES!
GREEN ARROW AND SPEEDY, THE SHINING KNIGHT, THE CRIMSON AVENGER, THE STAR-SPANGLED KID AND STRIPESY, AND THE VIGILANTE NO LONGER EXIST IN YOUR WORLD...
"... BUT ONLY THESE SEVEN KNOW THE WAY TO DESTROY THE GALACTIC HAND!"
"THAT'S WHY ORACLE SENT THE COMBINED FORCES OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE AND JUSTICE SOCIETY THROUGH TIME IN SEARCH OF THEM-- LEAVING ME BEHIND TO BRIEF OTHERS... SUCH AS YOU..."
THEN THE FATE OF EARTH RESTS IN THE HANDS OF OUR COLLEAGUES--
--AND THERE ISN'T A BLASTED THING WE CAN DO TO HELP!
3

EVEN AS GREEN LANTERN SPEAKS, THREE OF THOSE DARING DEFENDERS HAVE BEEN THRUST BACK INTO THE REALM OF REALITY...
SUPERMAN, SANDMAN and METAMORPHO
THE ELEMENT MAN
WOW! ORACLE SURE HAS SOME DELIVERY SERVICE!
AYEEE! PRAISE BUDDHA! HE SENDS WARRIORS TO DEFEND US!
AN OLD CHINESE MONK! IT SEEMS WE'VE BEEN EXPECTED!
TELL ME, ANCIENT ONE-- WHY DO YOU NEED WARRIORS TO PROTECT YOU?
COME, PLEASE-- WHILE THIS HUMBLE ONE EXPLAINS AS BEST HE CAN!
WITHIN THESE POOR CHAMBERS RESTS THE HERITAGE OF MY PEOPLE--
--ALL THE BEAUTY AND HERITAGE OF OUR PAST, HIDDEN AWAY FROM THE EYES OF THE INVADERS...
...UNTIL NOW!
I GET IT--THEY'RE AFTER THIS MUSEUM OF YOURS!
WHO ARE THESE INVADERS?
THEY ARE AS MANY AS THE LEAVES OF THE FOREST!
ONCE THEIR LEADER WAS NAMED TEMUJIN--BUT NOW THEY CALL HIM THE "UNIVERSAL RULER"--
GENGHIS KHAN!
4

HIS LEGIONS ARE LED BY AN ARMORED GOD ON A WINGED HORSE! NOTHING CAN STAND AGAINST THEM!
ARMORED MAN--? WINGED HORSE--?
SOUNDS LIKE THE SHINING KNIGHT!
IT DOES SEEM IMPOSSIBLE!
YET... I WONDER...
NO NEED TO WONDER, SUPES-- WHEN WE CAN FIND OUT FOR CERTAIN!
NOBODY'S GONNA NOTICE A HELIUM BREEZE DRIFTING THROUGH THEIR CAMP--
--SO I CAN CHECK OUT OL' GENGHIS'S ARMY!
MERE MINUTES LATER...
THE ARMORED ONE IS STILL AT MY COMMAND, SHAMAN!
YOUR FIERY GAZE HAS SEARED HIM TO THE SOUL..
YOU HAVE SERVED ME WELL!
I LIVE FOR NOTHING ELSE, GREAT KHAN!


AND THAT IS AS IT SHOULD BE!
COME, WE MUST PREPARE FOR TOMORROW'S ONSLAUGHT!
THEN I'D BETTER SNATCH OUR KNIGHT-ERRANT OUT OF HERE TONIGHT!
ALL IT TAKES IS A STAINLESS STEEL SWORD TO PROVIDE A QUICK ENTRANCE AND...
SIR JUSTIN! YOU DON'T KNOW ME-- BUT I'M A FRIEND!
I'M HERE TO HELP YOU ESCAPE...
WHAT--? INTRUDER! VARLET!
NO ONE MAY DISTURB THE CHAMBERS OF MY LIEGE, KHAN--AND LIVE TO TELL THE TALE!
5

ZOUNDS! WHAT FOUL WIZARDRY IS THIS?
THE CREATURE DOTH EVADE MY EVERY THRUST!
'TIS AS ELUSIVE AS THE WIND!
--OR FLUORINE GAS, TO BE MORE PRECISE, PRINCE CHARMING!
NOW EITHER I PULL A QUICK FADE--OR I END UP SO MUCH SCRAP METAL!
AND SO...
...THAT'S THE SET-UP, CHUMS--
--KHAN'S WITCH-MAN HAS HOODOOED SIR JUSTIN INTO PLAYING FIGUREHEAD FOR HIS ARMY!
AND AS LONG AS THE KNIGHT KEEPS SLINGIN' THAT SWORD OF HIS, WE CAN'T GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO CURE HIM!
IN THAT CASE, ELEMENT MAN--WE'LL LET HIM COME TO US!
TOMORROW MORNING, WHEN THE MONGOLS MOUNT THEIR ATTACK...
...WE'LL BE WAITING!
WHEN THE FIRST FINGERS OF DAWN STAB AT THE SKY, THREE STRANGELY-GARBED MEN WAIT ALONE-- TO MEET AN AWESOME ARMY...
HERE THEY COME--
OUTNUMBERING US FIVE-THOUSAND-TO-ONE!
YOU'RE DOING WONDERS FOR MY MORALE, SUPERMAN!
THIS IS POSITIVELY THE LAST TIME I LET YOU VOLUNTEER ME FOR ANYTHING!
6

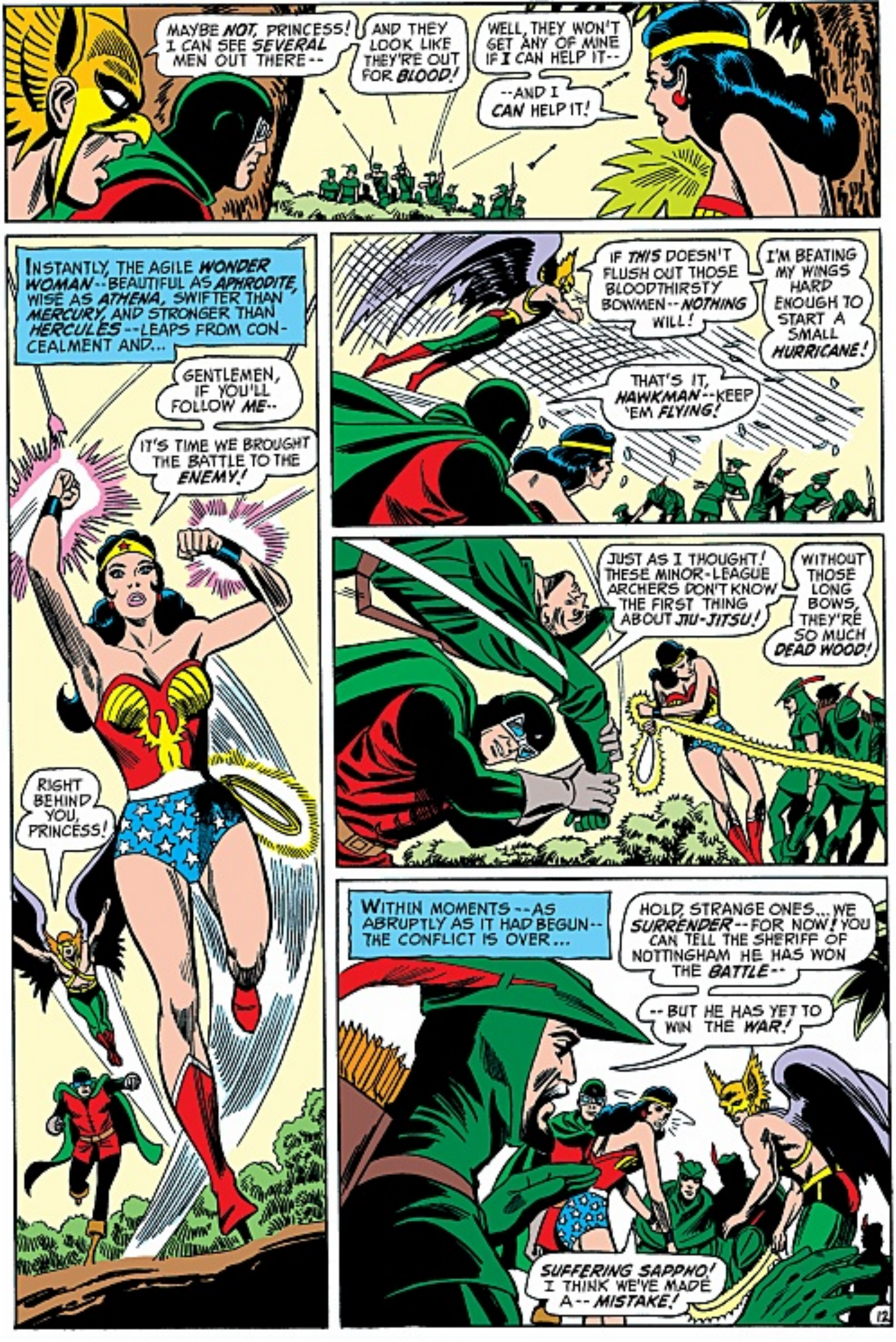

YOU VOLUNTEERED YOURSELF, ELEMENT MAN-- AND WITH NO REGRETS!
EITHER WE STAND AND FIGHT--OR THE HERITAGE OF A PEOPLE FALLS SHATTERED IN THE DUST!
YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE TO FIGHT AT ALL, FRIENDS!
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!
ONWARD, MY FELLOWS--FOR YOUR NOBLE LIEGE!
VICTORY SHALL BE OURS!
I WOULDN'T BET ON THAT, SIR JUSTIN!
SO--MINE ENEMIES DO SEND ANOTHER STRANGE CREATURE TO DESTROY ME!
LIKE THE OTHER, IT SHALL GO DOWN IN DEFEAT!
THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, SIR KNIGHT! HAVE AT THEE!
IF I CAN BEAT THE SHINING KNIGHT, I MIGHT ROUT THE MONGOLS AS WELL!
BUT AS THE TWO CHAMPIONS MEET IN COMBAT...
THWAACK
"UUNNFF!" NO CHANCE! SIR JUSTIN'S POWERS ARE MAGICAL IN ORIGIN!
HATE TO USE THAT OLD "DISCRETION" LINE--BUT RIGHT NOW IT SEEMS THE SENSIBLE THING TO DO!
OBSERVE, MY BRETHREN--THUS WILL YOUR WINGED GOD VANQUISH ALL WHO OPPOSE US!
ONWARD--TO VICTORY!!
7

AND INSTANTS LATER...
SUPERMAN--? WHAT HAPPENED OUT THERE?
NO TIME TO TALK!
YOU TWO HOLD OFF KHAN AND HIS CREW FOR A WHILE!
I'VE GOT SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO ATTEND TO!
HUH--? YOU GOTTA BE KIDDIN'!
YOUR SUPERMAN TAKES A LOT FOR GRANTED, METAMORPHO!
YEAH--YOU KNOW HOW IT IS WITH THOSE "ESTABLISHMENT-TYPES"!
STILL--IF WE'RE GONNA TAKE ON AN ARMY, I'D FEEL A LOT BETTER DOIN' IT AS A COBALT TANK!
C'MON, SANDMAN--CLIMB ABOARD!
LIKE A GREAT TIDE OF SAVAGE HUMANITY, THE MONGOL HORDE SURGES ONWARD--DRAWING EVER CLOSER TO THE TRANSFORMED METAMORPHO AND HIS CLOAKED PASSENGER -- BUT SURPRISINGLY...
WE DRIVE OUR HORSES INTO THE GROUND WITH RUNNING--
... AND YET THAT ACCURSED VILLAGE REMAINS EVER BEYOND OUR GRASP!
BY THE GODS--WHY?!
...CANNON SHELLS ARE FINISHED, SANDMAN--BUT IF THAT SLEEP-GAS FORMULA YOU GAVE ME IS INCORRECT--!
IT'S CORRECT, ELEMENT MAN--I GUARANTEE IT!
NOW ADJUST YOUR CANNON AND GET THOSE SPARE ATOMS OF YOURS WORKING!
READY... AIM...
...FIRE!!
FWUMP
FWUMP
FWAMM
8

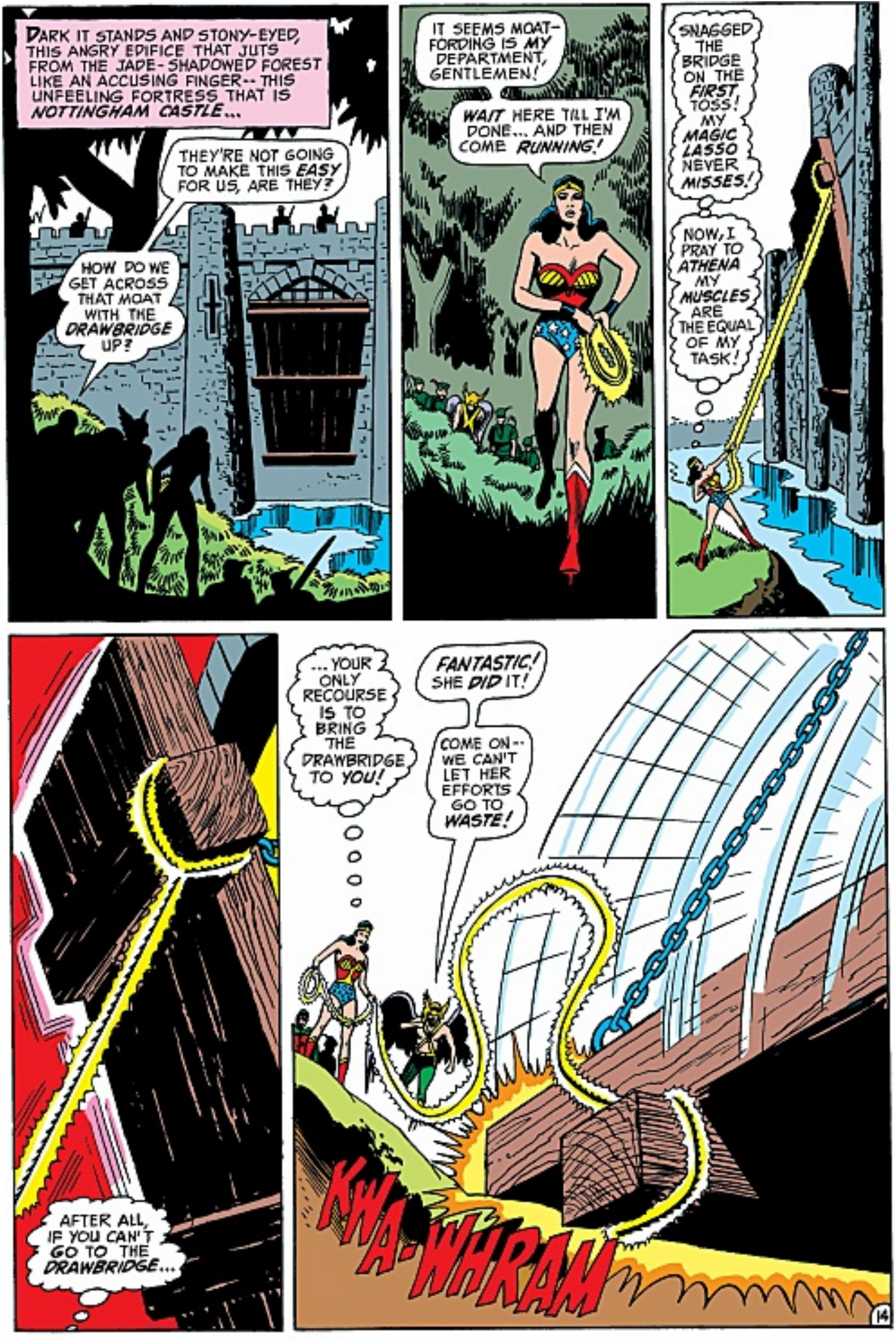
AND WHEN THE SMOKE OF BATTLE HAS CLEARED...
THIS CROWD WILL BE OUT FOR HOURS! LOOKS LIKE WE SAVED THAT VILLAGE!
SAVED WHAT VILLAGE, SANDMAN?
TAKE A LOOK-- AND TELL ME HOW AN ENTIRE HILL VANISHES?
NO BIG TRICK, ELEMENT MAN...
...I MOVED IT!
SUPERMAN!? SO THAT'S WHAT WAS SO IMPORTANT!
EXACTLY! RATHER THAN TAKE THE CHANCE THE MONGOLS MIGHT GET PAST US, I MOVED THE ENTIRE HILLSIDE TO A PLACE WHERE THEY'LL NEVER FIND IT!
I SEE YOU'VE GOT THINGS WELL IN HAND HERE!
--AS WELL AS CAN BE EXPECTED!
THE ANTIDOTE I GAVE SIR JUSTIN AND HIS STEED IS TAKING EFFECT!
SOON AS HE'S BACK TO NORMAL, WE'LL LEAVE HERE--
YEAH-- HOW?
NOW THAT OUR TASK IS COMPLETE, I BET ORACLE KNOWS ABOUT IT--
--AND WILL BE SENDING FOR US!
IN THAT CASE, HOLD SIR JUSTIN!
THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO DO!
MOMENTS LATER...
YOU PEGGED IT, SUPERMAN-- ORACLE'S PICK-UP SERVICE IS AS GOOD AS HIS DELIVERY!
WONDER WHAT SANDMAN DID TO OL' GENGHIS?
SOMETHING I HAVEN'T DONE IN YEARS!
--AND BELIEVE ME, IT FELT GOOD!
There is no land beyond the law
Where TYRANTS rule with unshakable power!
It's but a DREAM from which the evil wake,
To face their FATE...
Their terrifying hour!
THE SANDMAN
9

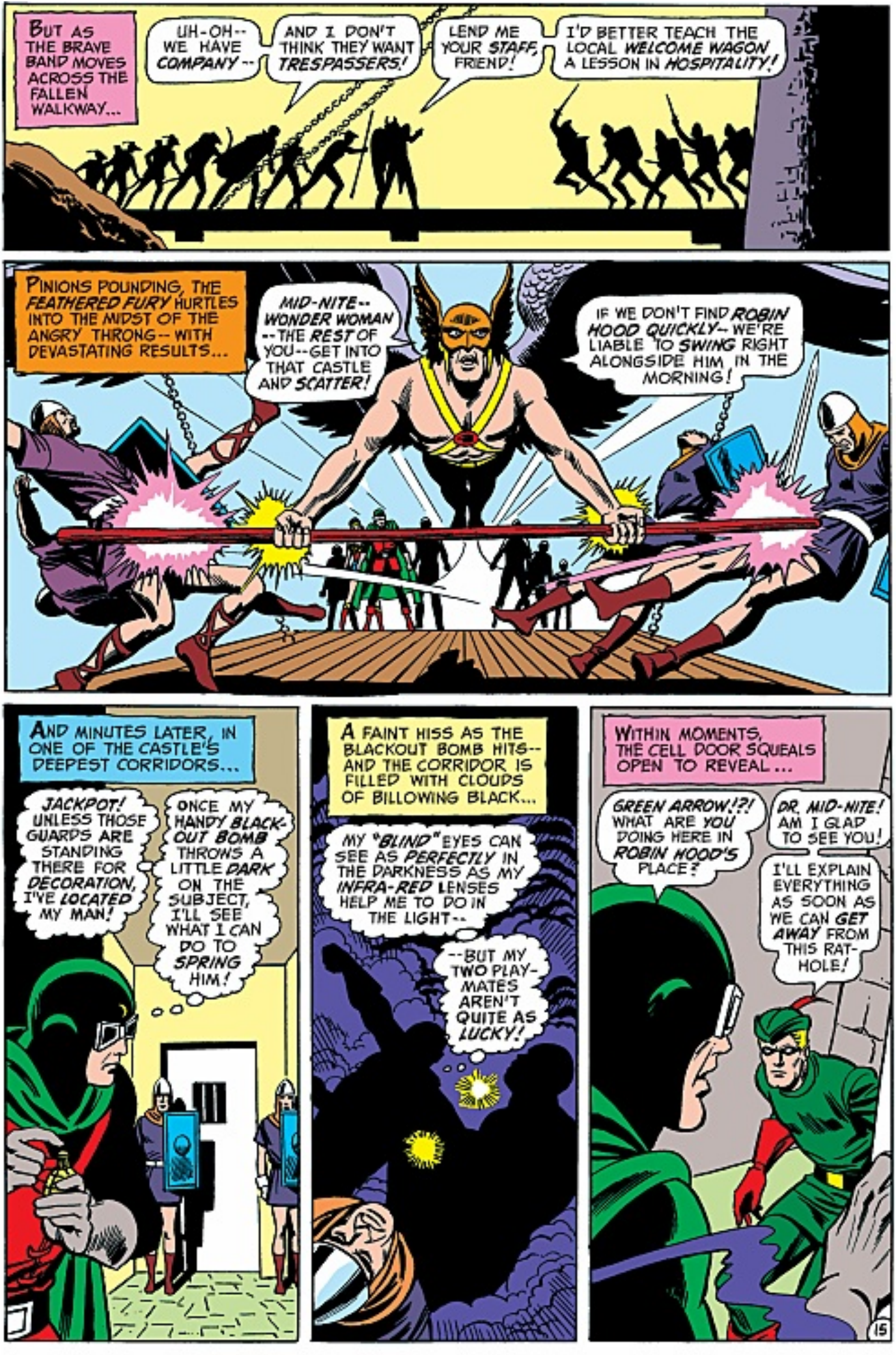
MEANWHILE--THROUGH THE CENTURIES--IN JUSTICE SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS...
...ENOUGH! THIS SITTING ON MY HANDS IS DRIVING ME CRAZY!
THERE MUST BE SOME ACTION TO TAKE...
...AND I'VE FIGURED OUT WHAT IT IS!
HOW ABOUT LETTING US IN ON THE SECRET, GL?
FAIR PLAY
THE GRAVE OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER--! SOMEBODY MUST HAVE PUT IT THERE--
--AND I'M HEADING FOR THE HIMALAYAS TO FIND OUT WHO!
NOT WITHOUT US, YOU AIN'T, GL!
HATE TO LEAVE YOU IN THE LURCH AGAIN, DIANA!
KEEP MINDING THE STORE!
AND WITHIN MINUTES...
HOW DARK THE SKY IS! ALMOST AS IF IT RESENTS THAT GHASTLY HAND INTRUDING INTO ITS SPACE!
I SENSE MORE THAN PHANTOM FINGERS IN THE AIR, MR. TERRIFIC!
--MORE LIKE AN...
EARTHQUAKE!
YOU NEVER TOLD ME YOU WERE PSYCHIC, GL--
FAR FROM IT, ROBIN! I JUST...
GREAT SCOTT! THOSE KIDS--!
LIGHTNING REFLEXES SNAP INTO ACTION AND...
GOT 'EM--WITH NOTHING TO SPARE!
GL'S POWER RING SAVES THE DAY AGAIN!
THE DAY'S NOT OVER YET, ROBIN...
10

THE CRISP MORNING AIR CRACKLES FURIOUSLY AS THREE LITHE FIGURES MATERIALIZE IN THE HEART OF A FERTILE FOREST...
ASTOUNDING! ONE MOMENT WE'RE NOWHERE -- AND THE NEXT MOMENT WE'RE HERE!
QUESTION IS -- WHERE IS HERE?
FROM OUR SURROUNDINGS, DOCTOR -- I'D SAY IT'S THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE!
HEY, PEOPLE -- TAKE A DEEP BREATH! THE AIR IS SO FRESH -- SO CLEAN --
I HAVEN'T TASTED ANYTHING LIKE IT SINCE I LEFT MY NATIVE PLANET, THANAGAR!
APPARENTLY, HAWKMAN -- POLLUTION HASN'T BEEN INVENTED YET!
THE ATMOSPHERE IS SO PURE, IT'S MAKING ME LIGHT-HEADED!
SUDDENLY, THE EVERGREEN CALM IS SHATTERED BY THE SHRILL CRY OF COUNTLESS GOOSE-FLETCHED SHAFTS AS THEY WHISTLE FROM THE UNDERBRUSH -- HERALDING DEATH FOR THE THREE COURAGEOUS CRUSADERS WHO HAVE COME TO THIS STRANGE PLACE...
HAWKMAN
Wonder Woman
℞ DR. MID-NITE
HUNT COVER, MID-NITE -- OR YOU'RE LIABLE TO END UP BE-HEADED!
SHADES OF PLUTO! SOMEONE IS USING US FOR TARGETS!
IT APPEARS WE'VE FOUND OUR MAN!
11


MAYBE NOT, PRINCESS! I CAN SEE SEVERAL MEN OUT THERE--
AND THEY LOOK LIKE THEY'RE OUT FOR BLOOD!
WELL, THEY WON'T GET ANY OF MINE IF I CAN HELP IT--
--AND I CAN HELP IT!
INSTANTLY, THE AGILE WONDER WOMAN--BEAUTIFUL AS APHRODITE, WISE AS ATHENA, SWIFTER THAN MERCURY, AND STRONGER THAN HERCULES--LEAPS FROM CONCEALMENT AND...
GENTLEMEN, IF YOU'LL FOLLOW ME--
IT'S TIME WE BROUGHT THE BATTLE TO THE ENEMY!
RIGHT BEHIND YOU, PRINCESS!
IF THIS DOESN'T FLUSH OUT THOSE BLOODTHIRSTY BOWMEN--NOTHING WILL!
I'M BEATING MY WINGS HARD ENOUGH TO START A SMALL HURRICANE!
THAT'S IT, HAWKMAN--KEEP 'EM FLYING!
JUST AS I THOUGHT! THESE MINOR-LEAGUE ARCHERS DON'T KNOW THE FIRST THING ABOUT JIU-JITSU!
WITHOUT THOSE LONG BOWS, THEY'RE SO MUCH DEAD WOOD!
WITHIN MOMENTS--AS ABRUPTLY AS IT HAD BEGUN--THE CONFLICT IS OVER...
HOLD, STRANGE ONES... WE SURRENDER--FOR NOW! YOU CAN TELL THE SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM HE HAS WON THE BATTLE--
--BUT HE HAS YET TO WIN THE WAR!
SUFFERING SAPPHO! I THINK WE'VE MADE A--MISTAKE!
12

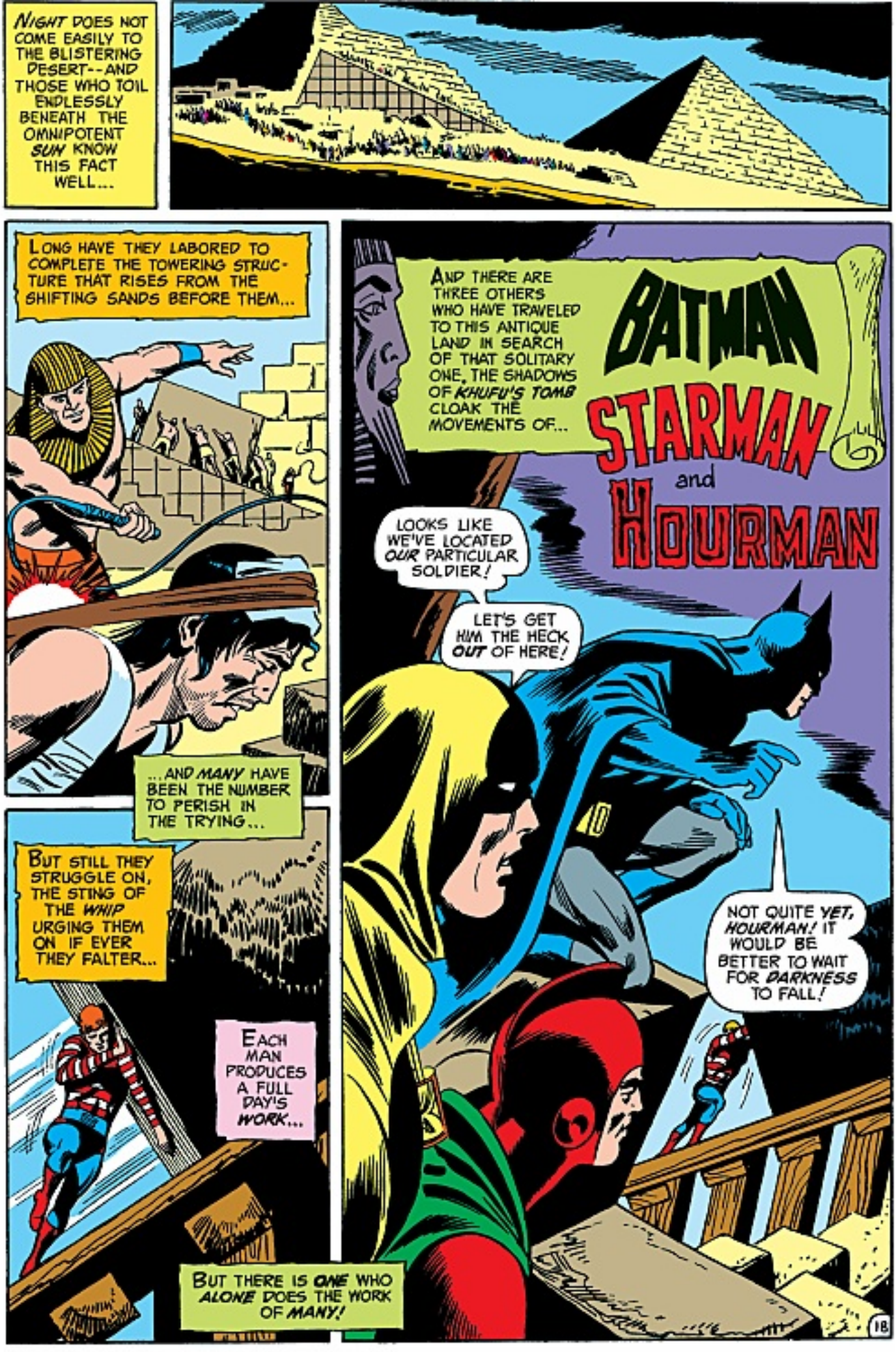
GOOD BOWMEN, WE'RE NOT AGENTS OF YOUR SHERIFF! OUR MISSION HERE IS A PEACEFUL ONE!
WE FOUGHT ONLY BECAUSE WE WERE ATTACKED!
Y-YOU'RE RELEASING US--? THEN WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUTH!
TELL ME-- HOW CAN THE MERRY MEN SERVE?
AND AFTER HAWKMAN HAS DESCRIBED THE ONE THEY SEEK...
I AM SORRY WE CANNOT HELP YOU, STRANGE ONES --BUT WE KNOW NOT ANY GREEN ARROW!
PERHAPS ROBIN HOOD COULD AID YOU WERE HE BUT HERE--FOR HE KNOWS ALL WHO BEND THEIR BOWS IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE...
...BUT THE SHERIFF IS HANGING BRAVE ROBIN ON THE MORROW!
HANGING ROBIN HOOD?! ISN'T THERE ANYTHING YOU CAN DO TO STOP IT?
WOULD THERE WERE! THE MERRY MEN AND I SHALL LAY SIEGE TO NOTTINGHAM CASTLE ERE THE DAWN --BUT 'TIS ONLY A FUTILE GESTURE!
GOOD ROBIN SHALL SWAY IN THE BREEZE ERE WE CAN BREACH THOSE WALLS!
PERHAPS THAT WAS TRUE BEFORE, LITTLE JOHN--BUT NOT ANY MORE!
WE'RE GOING TO HELP YOU STORM THAT CASTLE --AND THERE ISN'T A BARRICADE STANDING THAT CAN STOP US!
13


DARK IT STANDS AND STONY-EYED, THIS ANGRY EDIFICE THAT JUTS FROM THE JADE-SHADOWED FOREST LIKE AN ACCUSING FINGER-- THIS UNFEELING FORTRESS THAT IS NOTTINGHAM CASTLE...
THEY'RE NOT GOING TO MAKE THIS EASY FOR US, ARE THEY?
HOW DO WE GET ACROSS THAT MOAT WITH THE DRAWBRIDGE UP?
IT SEEMS MOAT-FORDING IS MY DEPARTMENT, GENTLEMEN!
WAIT HERE TILL I'M DONE... AND THEN COME RUNNING!
SNAGGED THE BRIDGE ON THE FIRST TOSS! MY MAGIC LASSO NEVER MISSES!
NOW, I PRAY TO ATHENA MY MUSCLES ARE THE EQUAL OF MY TASK!
AFTER ALL, IF YOU CAN'T GO TO THE DRAWBRIDGE...
... YOUR ONLY RECOURSE IS TO BRING THE DRAWBRIDGE TO YOU!
FANTASTIC! SHE DID IT!
COME ON-- WE CAN'T LET HER EFFORTS GO TO WASTE!
KWA-WHRAM
14


BUT AS THE BRAVE BAND MOVES ACROSS THE FALLEN WALKWAY...
UH-OH-- WE HAVE COMPANY--
AND I DON'T THINK THEY WANT TRESPASSERS!
LEND ME YOUR STAFF, FRIEND!
I'D BETTER TEACH THE LOCAL WELCOME WAGON A LESSON IN HOSPITALITY!
PINIONS POUNDING, THE FEATHERED FURY HURTLES INTO THE MIDST OF THE ANGRY THRONG-- WITH DEVASTATING RESULTS...
MID-NITE-- WONDER WOMAN --THE REST OF YOU--GET INTO THAT CASTLE AND SCATTER!
IF WE DON'T FIND ROBIN HOOD QUICKLY-- WE'RE LIABLE TO SWING RIGHT ALONGSIDE HIM IN THE MORNING!
AND MINUTES LATER, IN ONE OF THE CASTLE'S DEEPEST CORRIDORS...
JACKPOT! UNLESS THOSE GUARDS ARE STANDING THERE FOR DECORATION, I'VE LOCATED MY MAN!
ONCE MY HANDY BLACK-OUT BOMB THROWS A LITTLE DARK ON THE SUBJECT, I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO TO SPRING HIM!
A FAINT HISS AS THE BLACKOUT BOMB HITS-- AND THE CORRIDOR IS FILLED WITH CLOUDS OF BILLOWING BLACK...
MY "BLIND" EYES CAN SEE AS PERFECTLY IN THE DARKNESS AS MY INFRA-RED LENSES HELP ME TO DO IN THE LIGHT--
--BUT MY TWO PLAY-MATES AREN'T QUITE AS LUCKY!
WITHIN MOMENTS, THE CELL DOOR SQUEALS OPEN TO REVEAL...
GREEN ARROW!?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE IN ROBIN HOOD'S PLACE?
DR. MID-NITE! AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU!
I'LL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING AS SOON AS WE CAN GET AWAY FROM THIS RAT-HOLE!
15

OOPS! LOOKS LIKE REINFORCE-MENTS HAVE ARRIVED!
I'D BETTER GRAB ANOTHER BLACKOUT BOMB!
SAVE IT, DOC! THIS ONE'S ON ME!
THOSE CRUMBS SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT MY GEAR WHERE I COULD GET MY HANDS ON IT!
IN ONE BLURRING MOTION, THE ACE ARCHER PULLS A SHAFT FROM HIS QUIVER--NOTCHES IT --AND LETS IT FLY...
THE OLD NET ARROW HASN'T FAILED ME YET!
THE GUARDS WON'T UNRAVEL THEMSELVES FOR DAYS!
IF THAT ARROW EVER DOES FAIL YOU, G.A.--YOU WON'T BE ALIVE TO KNOW IT!
C'MON--LET'S COLLECT THE OTHERS AND GET OUT OF HERE!
THE OTHERS?
LEAD ON, DOC-- NOW YOU'VE GOT ME INTERESTED!
AND AFTER THE VALIANT GROUP HAS BATTLED ITS WAY OUT OF THE CASTLE...
IT SEEMS WE RISKED OUR LIVES TO RESCUE THE WRONG MAN!
TELL US, KNAVE-- WHAT KNOWEST THOU OF ROBIN HOOD?
YOUR LEADER IS SAFE, LITTLE JOHN-- RECOVERING FROM WOUNDS IN THE LODGINGS OF A FRIENDLY FRIAR!
I DROVE OFF HIS ATTACKERS--AND ROBIN ASKED ME TO TAKE HIS PLACE!
I WAS COMING TO INFORM YOU MEN WHEN THE SHERIFF CAPTURED ME!
THEN OUR GRATITUDE IS YOURS, GREEN ARROW! WE...
W-WHAT SORCERY IS THIS? YOU FADE BEFORE OUR VERY EYES!
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WONDERING, LITTLE JOHN!
WHAT IS HAPPENING?
OUR MISSION HERE IS ACCOMPLISHED!
ORACLE IS BRINGING US HOME!
16

AND ONCE MORE, CENTURIES AHEAD...
1606
1719
1972
... AND THE GREAT NEBULA-LIKE HAND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS!
IT'S STARTED TO--CLOSE!
INDEED IT HAS, GREEN LANTERN!
AND IT SHALL CONTINUE TO CLOSE, CRUSHING THIS PLANET INTO SO MUCH COSMIC DUST--
--UNLESS TOTAL WORLD DOMINATION IS GIVEN ME WITHIN THE NEXT THIRTY-SIX HOURS!
DAILY HERALD
7 SOLDIERS OF VICTORY DEFEAT THE CRIMINAL "HAND"
I ALMOST WISH THE SEVEN SOLDIERS WERE STILL ALIVE TO WITNESS THIS DAY--THE DAY OF MY ULTIMATE TRIUMPH!
THEY THOUGHT ME DEAD--DESTROYED BY THE SAME DEVICE I HAD TRIED TO USE ON THEM*--
--BUT THEY WERE WRONG!
*EDITOR'S NOTE: CHECK JLA #100 FOR DETAILS.
I SURVIVED--RATHER, MOST OF ME SURVIVED!
IRONICALLY, MY OWN HAND WAS HOPELESSLY MANGLED--FORCING ME TO REPLACE IT WITH THIS--
THE MECHANICAL IRON HAND FROM WHICH I TAKE MY NEW NAME!
BUT NO! THE LAW'S LEGIONNAIRES ARE GONE--AND THE JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA STANDS IN THEIR PLACE TO THWART ME!
BUT I WILL NOT BE CONQUERED AGAIN!
LIKE THE SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY BEFORE THEM...THE JUSTICE SOCIETY MUST DIE!
17


NIGHT DOES NOT COME EASILY TO THE BLISTERING DESERT--AND THOSE WHO TOIL ENDLESSLY BENEATH THE OMNIPOTENT SUN KNOW THIS FACT WELL...
LONG HAVE THEY LABORED TO COMPLETE THE TOWERING STRUCTURE THAT RISES FROM THE SHIFTING SANDS BEFORE THEM...
...AND MANY HAVE BEEN THE NUMBER TO PERISH IN THE TRYING...
BUT STILL THEY STRUGGLE ON, THE STING OF THE WHIP URGING THEM ON IF EVER THEY FALTER...
EACH MAN PRODUCES A FULL DAY'S WORK...
BUT THERE IS ONE WHO ALONE DOES THE WORK OF MANY!
AND THERE ARE THREE OTHERS WHO HAVE TRAVELED TO THIS ANTIQUE LAND IN SEARCH OF THAT SOLITARY ONE, THE SHADOWS OF KHUFU'S TOMB CLOAK THE MOVEMENTS OF...
BATMAN
STARMAN and HOURMAN
LOOKS LIKE WE'VE LOCATED OUR PARTICULAR SOLDIER!
LET'S GET HIM THE HECK OUT OF HERE!
NOT QUITE YET, HOURMAN! IT WOULD BE BETTER TO WAIT FOR DARKNESS TO FALL!
18

AND WHEN EVENING FALLS...
...I KEEP TELLIN' YA, FATSO-- THERE IS NO MAGICAL SECRET TO MY STRENGTH!
LYING WIZARD, MY PATIENCE IS AT AN END!
MY LASH WILL RIP THE TRUTH FROM YOU!
THAT'S A NO-NO, FATSO--
--YOU'RE LIABLE TO BRUISE THE MERCHANDISE!
HUH?
GREAT RA!-- MORE WIZARDS! THEY... UUNNFF!
NEXT TIME, PICK ON SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T HAVE HIS HANDS TIED!
STARMAN! BATMAN! HOURMAN!
HOW DID YOU EVER FIND ME HERE?
WE'LL EXPLAIN AFTER WE ESCAPE, STRIPESY!
LET'S GET MOVING!
BUT BEFORE THE WEAKENED STRIPESY CAN BURST HIS BONDS...
HOLD, MAGICIANS-- ONE MORE MOVE...
...AND YOUR COMPANION DIES!
NOT IF MY COSMIC ROD CAN HELP IT!
THEN, WIZARD, YOU SHALL HAVE YOUR MAGIC WAND NO MORE!
WHAT--?!
STARMAN-- YOUR COSMIC ROD--! SNARED BY A WHIP!
19

SORRY, STRIPESY-- GUESS TURNABOUT IS FAIR PLAY!
NO HARD FEELIN'S, FELLAS!
YOU DID YOUR BEST!
ENOUGH CHATTER, WIZARDS! DO YOU SURRENDER?
OR DOES MY BLADE TASTE HIS FLESH?
WHAT CHOICE DO WE HAVE?
YOU WIN!

THWACK
THUNK
THOSE WHO SERVE THE SON OF THE SUN ALWAYS WIN!
UGH!
UNFF!
GGNN!

AND WHEN THE THREE HEROES "CRAWL" OUT OF THE DARKNESS AT LAST...
MY ACHING HEAD! WHERE DID THOSE DUDES DROP US, ANYHOW?
UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS--
--WE'RE SMACK IN THE CENTER OF THE PYRAMID, HOURMAN--
--IN THE PHARAOH'S BURIAL CHAMBER!

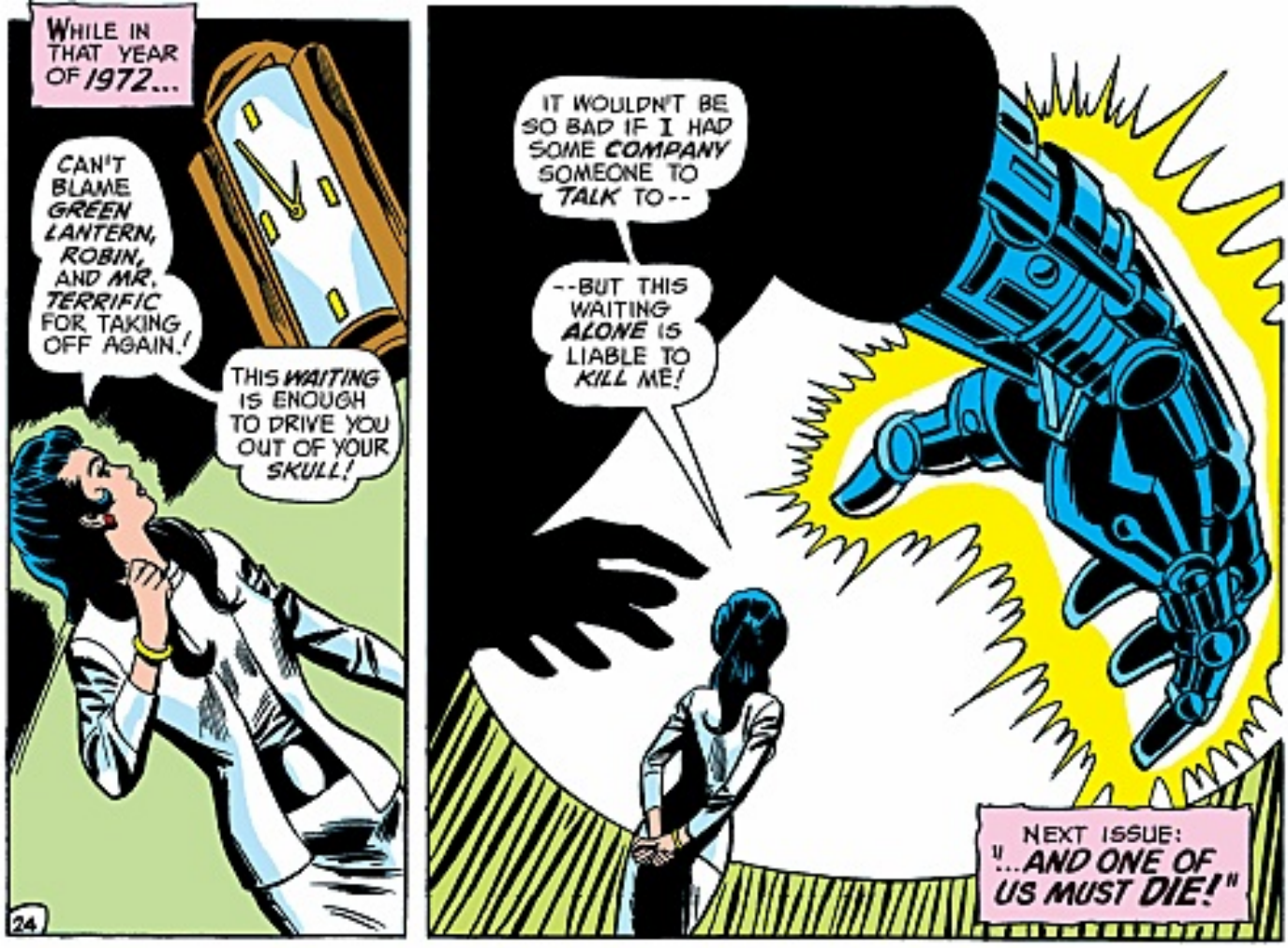
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO BRING MY COSMIC ROD TO ME BY MENTAL CONCENTRATION--
BUT IT'S TOO FAR FROM ME!
AND MY SUPER-POWERED HOUR IS UP!
HOW ARE WE GONNA GET OUT OF THIS?
GIVE ME A MINUTE TO THINK!

FOR A TIME, THE BATMAN IS SILENT-- WHEN SUDDENLY...
WHAT THE HECK YOU DOING?
I'VE HAD THAT HOURGLASS FOR YEARS!
BETTER A NEW TIMEPIECE AND A NEW LEASE ON LIFE, HOURMAN!
JUST HANG ON A SECOND!
20

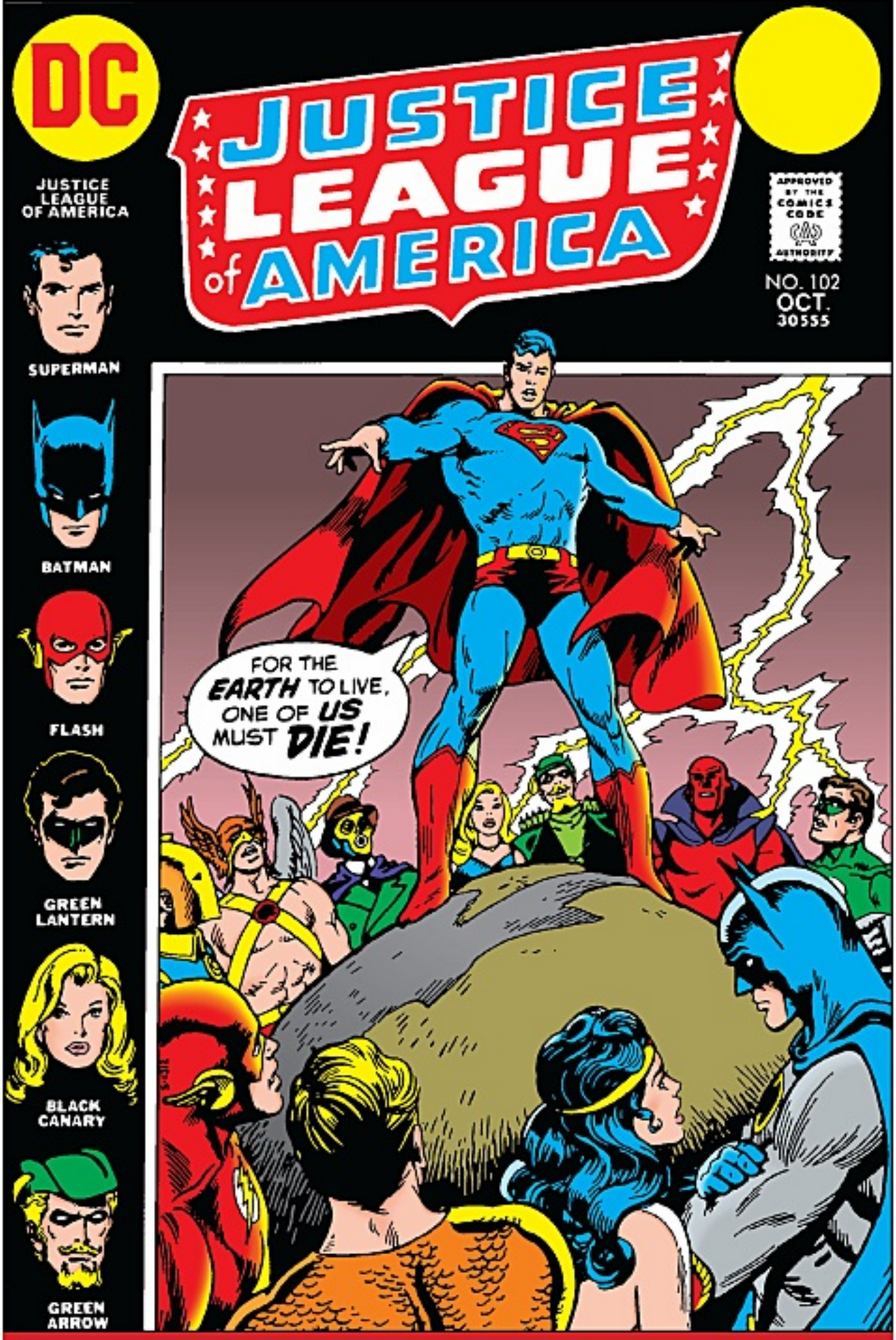
THERE! GRAB YOURSELVES A PIECE OF THE BROKEN HOURGLASS--
--AND START CUTTING THROUGH YOUR ROPES!
KRASSH
RIGHT ON, BATMAN!
I'LL SEND YOU A BILL FOR MY EGG-TIMER!
MOMENTS LATER...
DONE! NOW OUR PROBLEM IS FINDING A WAY OUT OF THIS JOINT!
AS I REMEMBER, THESE TOMBS WERE USUALLY BUILT WITH MAZE-LIKE PASSAGEWAYS--
--TO CONFUSE POTENTIAL LOOTERS!
-- AND US, STARMAN!
I'LL TAKE A MIRACLO PILL-- AND PUNCH US OUT AN EXIT!
HOLD IT, HOURMAN-- THIS PLACE'LL BE AN HISTORIC TREASURE SOMEDAY!
NO--THERE HAS TO BE A BETTER WAY--!
STARMAN--! MAYBE YOU CAN'T BRING YOUR COSMIC ROD HERE--BUT YOU STILL CONTROL ITS ATOMS!
YOU'VE GOT TO CONCENTRATE-- LET THE COSMIC ROD SHOW US THE WAY OUT!
I'VE NEVER ATTEMPTED IT BEFORE-- BUT...
WELL, IT'S WORTH THE TRY!
AND TRY THE ASTRAL AVENGER DOES! HIS FACE CONTORTS INTO A MASK OF RAW COURAGE AND GRIM DETERMI-NATION-- UNTIL...
LOOK! THE FICKLE FINGER OF FATE-- BECKONING US!
STARMAN DID IT!
LET'S GET GOING!
21

CAUTIOUSLY, THREE STRANGELY-GARBED CRUSADERS FOLLOW THE FLEETING ENERGY-TRAIL ALONG THE TWISTING PASSAGEWAYS--AND SOON...
EASY, TEAM--LOOKS LIKE WE'VE REACHED THE END OF THE TRAIL!
--AND THAT MUCH CLOSER TO MY COSMIC ROD!
WE'VE GOT INTERFERENCE OUT THERE!
NOT FOR LONG!
I'LL SHOW YOU A LITTLE TRICK!
SOME MENTAL MANIPULATION OF THE COSMIC ROD AND--PRESTO!
SAVES A LOT OF WEAR AND TEAR ON MY UNIFORM!
TWACK
THUNK
LET THAT BE A LESSON TO YOU BOYS--
--YOU SHOULDN'T TAKE SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T BELONG TO YOU!
WE'D BETTER FIND STRIPESY--
--BEFORE HIS CAPTORS DO SOMETHING HE'LL REGRET!
SHORTLY...
GREAT GALAXIES--STRIPESY!
THEY'VE HUNG HIM OUT TO DRY--LIKE AN ANIMAL HIDE!
THEN LET'S HIT THOSE GUARDS--AND SKIN 'EM!
22

BATMAN--
STARMAN--
HOURMAN--
YOU ESCAPED--!
NATURALLY! WE'RE THE GOOD GUYS!
KEEP COOL, STRIPESY! WE'LL SET YOU FREE IN A SECOND!
NOT THIS TIME, PALS...
KWA
...THIS TIME I FREE MYSELF!!
ACCKK!
NOW-- AS I RECOLLECT--
--I OWE YOU BUMS SOME BRUISES!
OOOFF!
UNNFF!
AND A BATTLE ROYAL LATER...
THOSE LUGS WERE REAL QUITTERS--
WOULDN'T GET UP AGAIN... AFTER ...THE FOURTH TIME I SLUGGED 'EM!
MY, MY! I WONDER WHY?
AND I WONDER HOW WE'RE GETTING BACK TO OUR OWN TIME-- NOW THAT OUR JOB HERE IS DONE?
THAT ANSWERS YOUR QUESTION, STARMAN!
ORACLE HAS SENT FOR US AGAIN!
WE'RE GOING HOME... TO 1972!
23



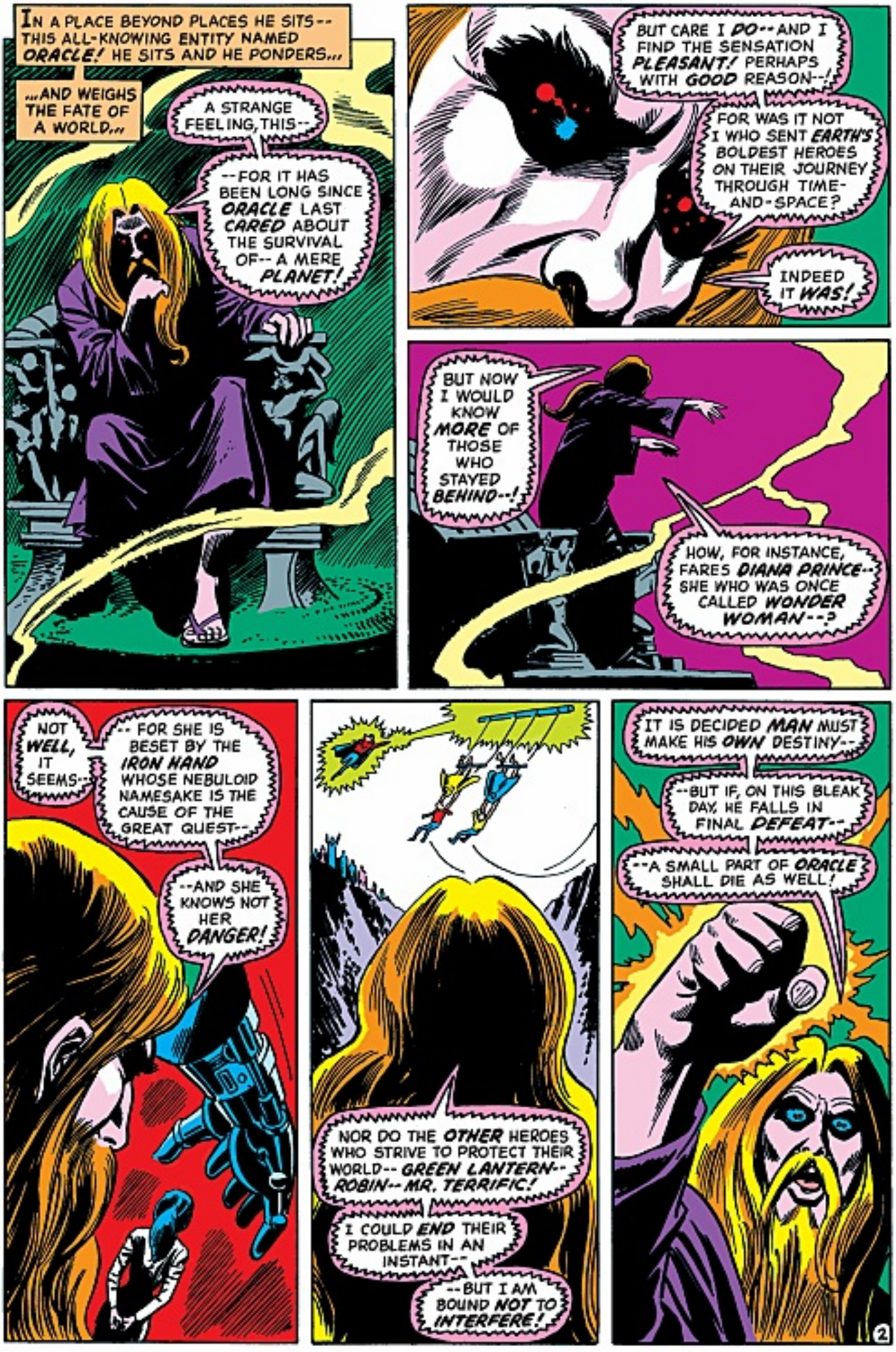
The JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA

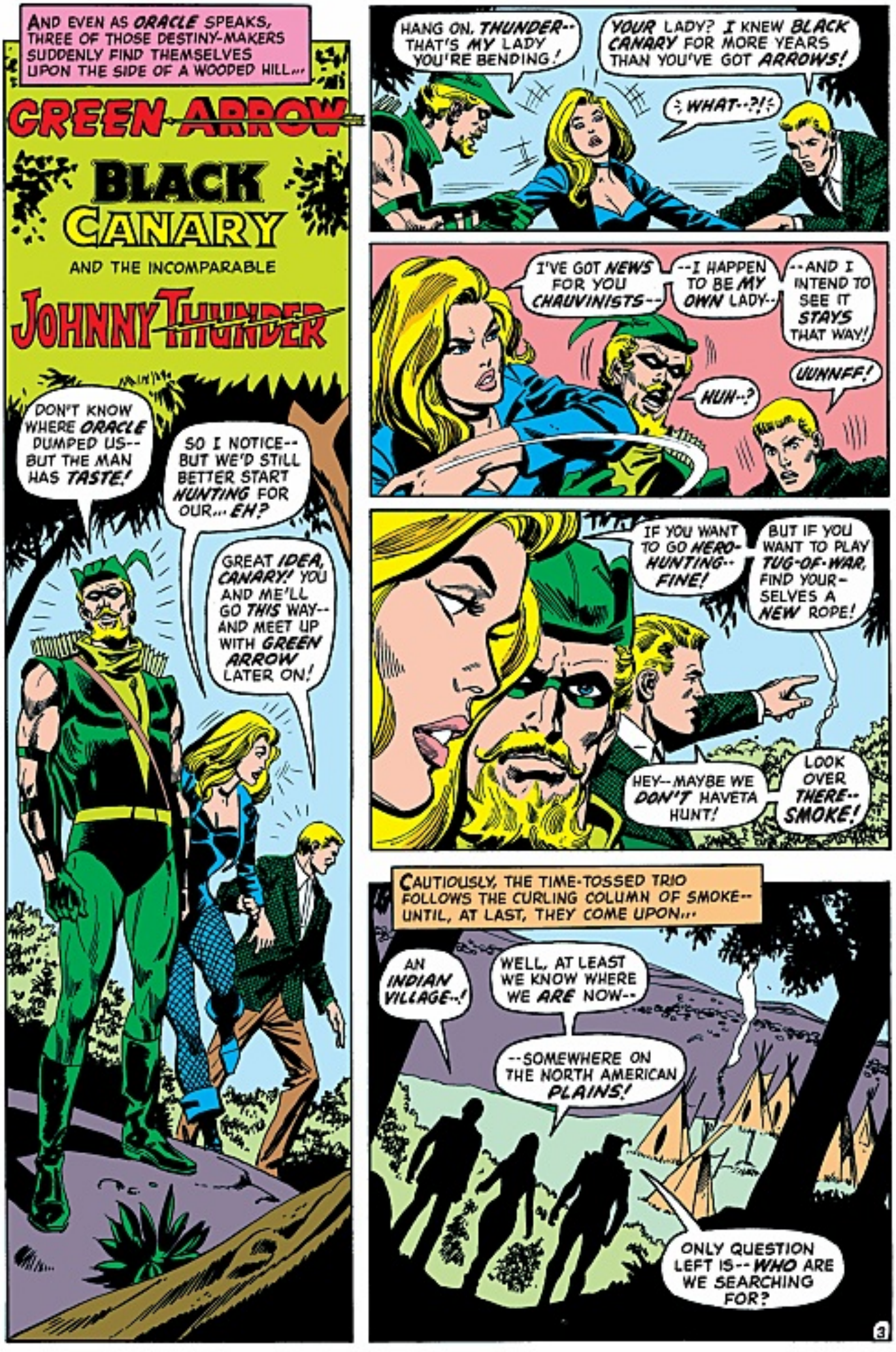


Cover for **JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA #102** (1972)
Art by Nick Cardy

"AND ONE OF US MUST DIE!"

LEN WEIN-- WRITER. DICK DILLIN-- PENCILLER. JOE GIELLA & DICK GIORDANO-- INKERS.


IN A PLACE BEYOND PLACES HE SITS-- THIS ALL-KNOWING ENTITY NAMED ORACLE! HE SITS AND HE PONDERS...
...AND WEIGHS THE FATE OF A WORLD...
A STRANGE FEELING, THIS--
--FOR IT HAS BEEN LONG SINCE ORACLE LAST CARED ABOUT THE SURVIVAL OF-- A MERE PLANET!
BUT CARE I DO-- AND I FIND THE SENSATION PLEASANT! PERHAPS WITH GOOD REASON--!
FOR WAS IT NOT I WHO SENT EARTH'S BOLDEST HEROES ON THEIR JOURNEY THROUGH TIME-AND-SPACE?
INDEED IT WAS!
BUT NOW I WOULD KNOW MORE OF THOSE WHO STAYED BEHIND--!
HOW, FOR INSTANCE, FARES DIANA PRINCE-- SHE WHO WAS ONCE CALLED WONDER WOMAN--?
NOT WELL, IT SEEMS--
-- FOR SHE IS BESET BY THE IRON HAND WHOSE NEBULOID NAMESAKE IS THE CAUSE OF THE GREAT QUEST--
--AND SHE KNOWS NOT HER DANGER!
NOR DO THE OTHER HEROES WHO STRIVE TO PROTECT THEIR WORLD-- GREEN LANTERN-- ROBIN-- MR. TERRIFIC!
I COULD END THEIR PROBLEMS IN AN INSTANT--
--BUT I AM BOUND NOT TO INTERFERE!
IT IS DECIDED MAN MUST MAKE HIS OWN DESTINY--
--BUT IF, ON THIS BLEAK DAY, HE FALLS IN FINAL DEFEAT--
--A SMALL PART OF ORACLE SHALL DIE AS WELL!
2


AND EVEN AS ORACLE SPEAKS, THREE OF THOSE DESTINY-MAKERS SUDDENLY FIND THEMSELVES UPON THE SIDE OF A WOODED HILL...
GREEN ARROW
BLACK CANARY
AND THE INCOMPARABLE
JOHNNY THUNDER
DON'T KNOW WHERE ORACLE DUMPED US-- BUT THE MAN HAS TASTE!
SO I NOTICE-- BUT WE'D STILL BETTER START HUNTING FOR OUR... EH?
GREAT IDEA, CANARY! YOU AND ME'LL GO THIS WAY-- AND MEET UP WITH GREEN ARROW LATER ON!
HANG ON, THUNDER-- THAT'S MY LADY YOU'RE BENDING!
YOUR LADY? I KNEW BLACK CANARY FOR MORE YEARS THAN YOU'VE GOT ARROWS!
WHAT--?!
I'VE GOT NEWS FOR YOU CHAUVINISTS--
--I HAPPEN TO BE MY OWN LADY--
--AND I INTEND TO SEE IT STAYS THAT WAY!
UUNNFF!
HUH--?
IF YOU WANT TO GO HERO-HUNTING-- FINE!
BUT IF YOU WANT TO PLAY TUG-OF-WAR, FIND YOURSELVES A NEW ROPE!
HEY--MAYBE WE DON'T HAVETA HUNT!
LOOK OVER THERE-- SMOKE!
CAUTIOUSLY, THE TIME-TOSSED TRIO FOLLOWS THE CURLING COLUMN OF SMOKE-- UNTIL, AT LAST, THEY COME UPON...
AN INDIAN VILLAGE--!
WELL, AT LEAST WE KNOW WHERE WE ARE NOW--
--SOMEWHERE ON THE NORTH AMERICAN PLAINS!
ONLY QUESTION LEFT IS-- WHO ARE WE SEARCHING FOR?
3

OFFHAND, GREEN ARROW-- I WOULD SAY IT WAS HIM!
THE VIGILANTE-- A PRISONER! THEY'RE GOING TO BURN HIM AT THE STAKE!
TOO BAD THIS AIN'T THE MOVIES-- OR THE CAVALRY WOULD BE COMIN' TO THE RESCUE BY NOW!
THE CAVALRY HASN'T BEEN INVENTED YET, BRIGHT-EYES--
--SO I'M AFRAID OUR LONESOME COWBOY'LL JUST HAVE TO SETTLE FOR US!
MAYBE NOT, GA! I'LL CALL MY MAGIC THUNDERBOLT--
--AND HE CAN CONJURE UP A CAVALRY FOR US!
SAY YOU!*
*EDITOR'S NOTE: CEI-U-- THE BAHDNISIAN HEX THAT GIVES JOHNNY CONTROL OF THE GENIE-LIKE THUNDERBOLT!
THE MYSTIC WORDS SPOKEN, JOHNNY THUNDER AWAITS THE ALMOST-INSTANTANEOUS APPEARANCE OF HIS SUPERNATURAL SERVANT...
...BUT AFTER SEVERAL LONG MINUTES...
THE THUNDERBOLT DIDN'T SHOW! THAT'S NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE!
THERE'S A FIRST TIME FOR EVERY-THING, PAL! HE PROBABLY GOT AS TIRED OF YOU AS I HAVE!
NOW, COME ON-- WE GOT US A COWBOY TO RESCUE!
THERE IS A FAINT RUSTLE OF THE TREE BRANCHES AS THE DARING TRIO MOVES FORWARD-- AND SUDDENLY...
WE'VE BEEN DISCOVERED--!
REALLY? I NEVER WOULD'VE GUESSED--!
THE BATTLE IS SHORT...
...AND NOT VERY SWEET AT ALL...
4

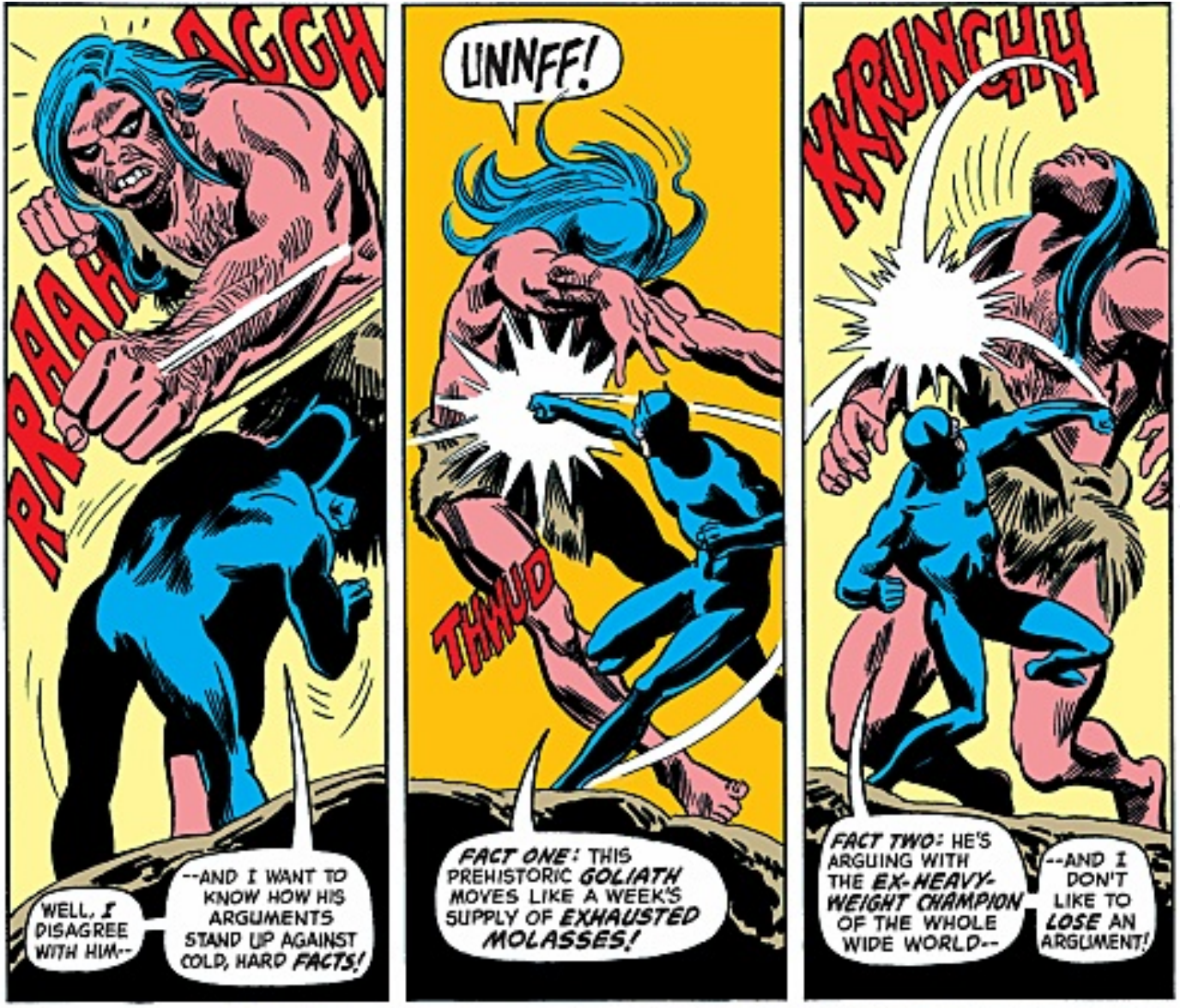
AND WHEN GREEN ARROW, BLACK CANARY, AND JOHNNY THUNDER FINALLY REGAIN CONSCIOUSNESS...
SO, WHITE-SKINS-- YOU AWAKEN AT LAST! YOU ARE WEAK ENEMIES, INDEED!
HATE TO DISAPPOINT YOU, DOC-- BUT WE CAME HERE IN PEACE!
THAT'S RIGHT! WE HAVE NO WISH TO HARM YOU!
YOU LIE! I HAVE SPOKEN TO THE BUFFALO SPIRIT-- AND HE HAS TOLD ME YOU MUST DIE--
--OR OTHER WHITE-SKINS WILL ONE DAY COME-- TO KILL THE BUFFALO--
--AND STEAL AWAY OUR LAND!
GOTTA ADMIT YOU'VE GOT A POWERFUL ARGUMENT, FRIEND-- BUT I STILL WISH YOU'D RECONSIDER--!
NO-- THE SPIRITS HAVE SPOKEN! WHEN NEXT THE MOON IS FULL--
--YOU WILL DIE!
AS WILL DIE THE OTHER WHITE-SKINNED ONE-- TONIGHT!
AND MOMENTS LATER...
STILL TIME TO CHANGE YORE MIND, HOMBRE! I'M TELLIN' YUH--
--YUH GOT THE WRONG MAN!
SILENCE, WHITE-SKIN! WE KILL YOU ONLY IN OUR OWN DEFENSE!
IN THAT CASE, YOU WON'T MIND IF WE HAPPEN TO DEFEND OURSELVES?!
HIYEEE!
WELL, I'LL BE SWAGGERED--!
5

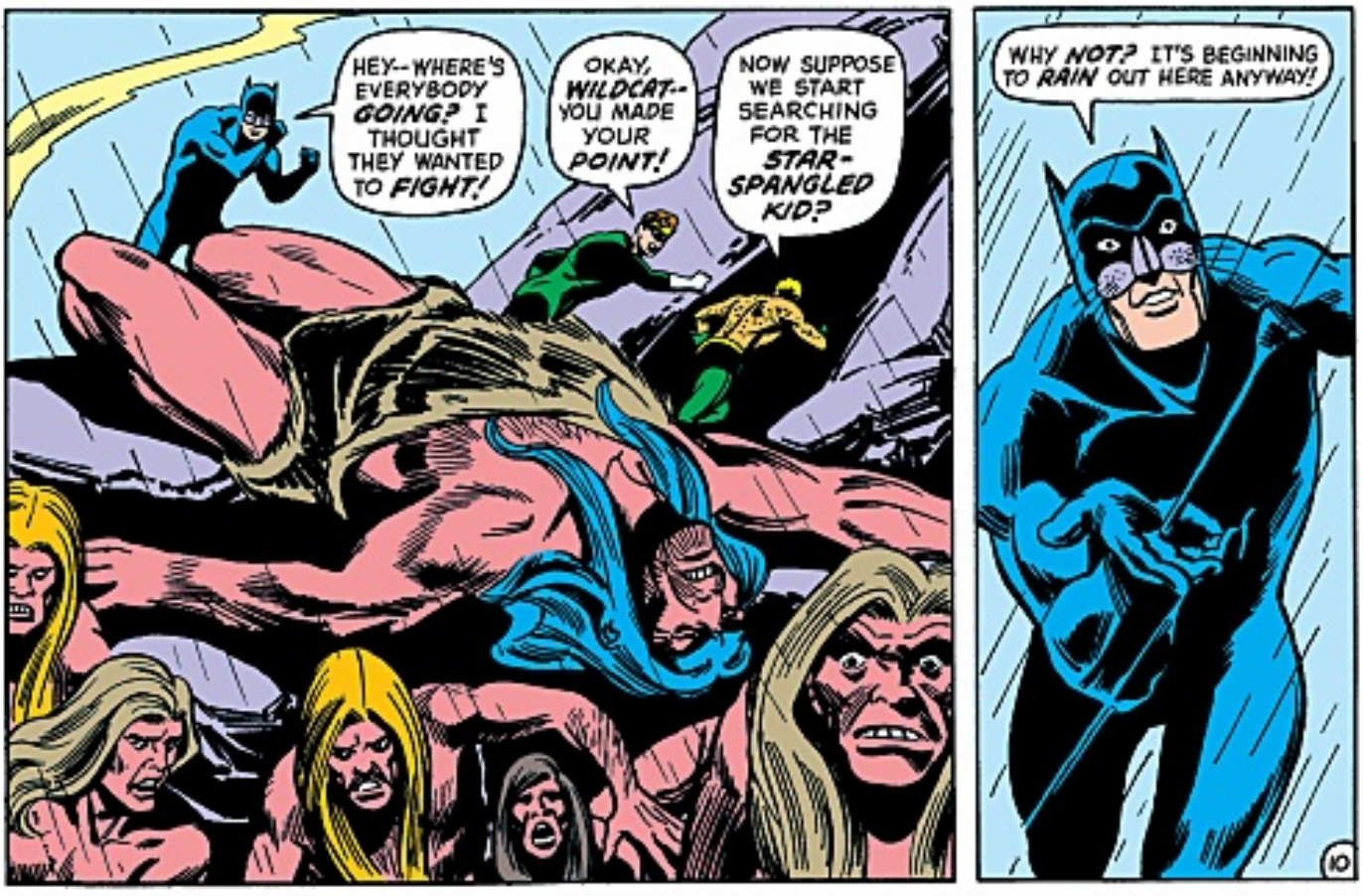
I DON'T KNOW WHO ALL YOU RANNIES ARE -- BUT I AIN'T NEVER BEEN HAPPIER TO SEE ANYBODY!
TIME FOR INTRODUCTIONS LATER, VIG--
--AFTER WE GET YOU OUT OF HERE!
WELL, THEN-- WHY DON'T I LEND YUH A HAND?
THESE JASPERS ARE SO PRIMITIVE-- THEY DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER TO TAKE MY IRONS!
BLAM B-AM
BLAM BLAM
FOR SEVERAL MOMENTS, THE VIGILANTE'S MAN-MADE THUNDER SPLITS THE AIR--
--UNTIL THE SOUND IS DROWNED OUT BY A GREATER THUNDER STILL...
RRR
UUU
MMMBBLLLEE
HEY--(HIC)--SOUNDS LIKE--(HIC)--LIKE IT'S GONNA--(HIC)--RAIN!
I ONLY WISH IT WERE, JOHNNY!
TAKE A LOOK OVER THERE!
B-B-B- BUFFALO-- (HIC)-- HEADIN' THIS-- (HIC)-- THIS WAY! (HIC)
WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO-- (HIC)-- DO-- (HIC)-- DO NOW? (HIC)
FUNNY YOU SHOULD ASK THAT!
THUNDERBOLT? WHERE IN--(HIC)-- BLAZES HAVE YOU (HIC)-- YOU BEEN?
I CALLED YOU--(HIC)-- HOURS AGO!
SORRY, PAL-- BUT IT TOOK ME A THOUSAND YEARS OR SO TO FIND YOU!
YOU ARE OFF THE BEATEN PATH, YOU KNOW!
SO TELL ME-- WHAT CAN I UN-DO FOR YOU?
6

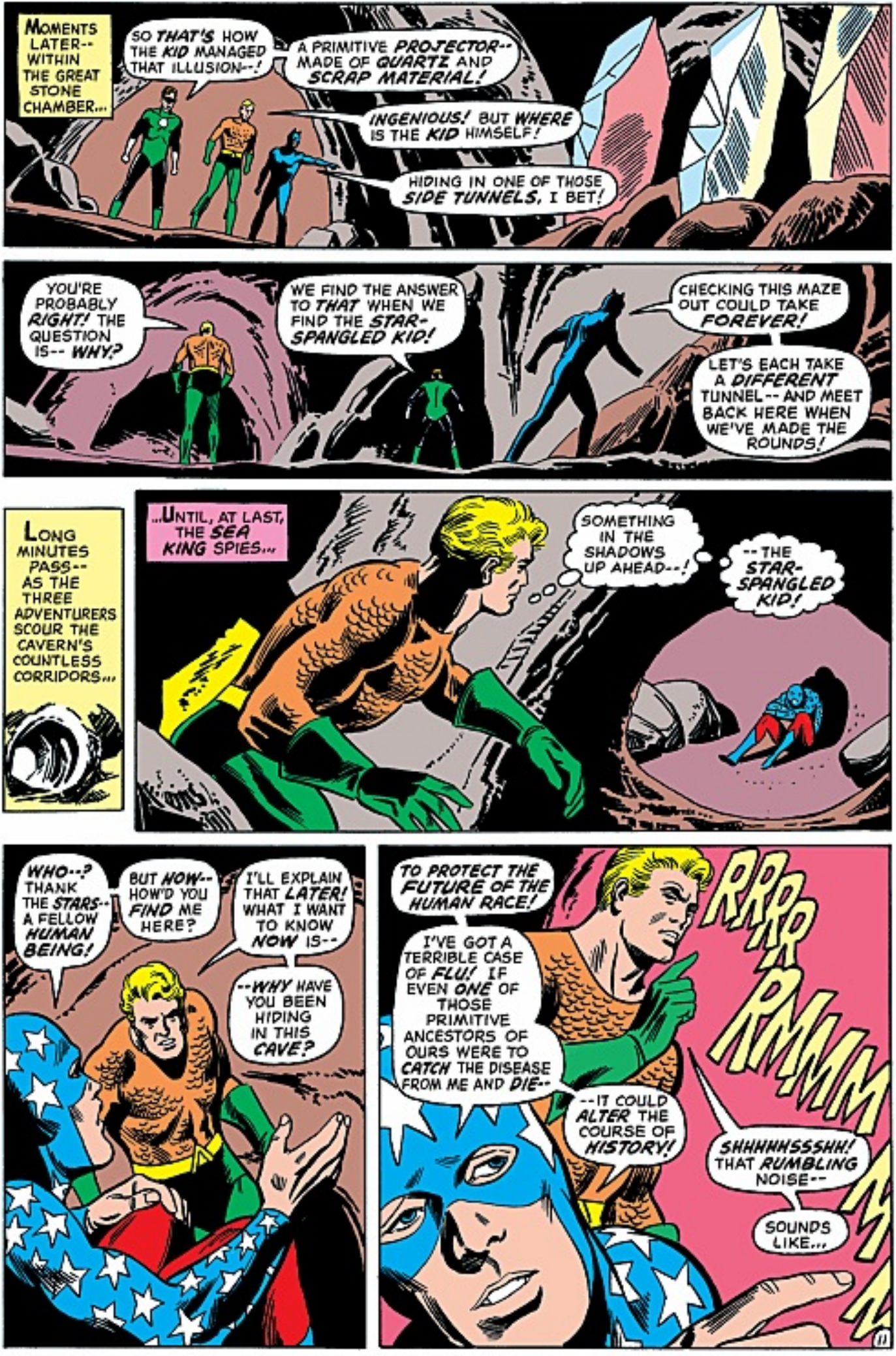
THOSE-- (HIC)-- BUFFALO (HIC)--
--YOU'VE GOTTA-- (HIC)-- GOTTA-- (HIC)-- STOP 'EM!
YOUR WISH IS MY COMMAND--
--AS SOON AS YOU SAY THOSE TWO LI'L MAGIC WORDS!
BUT I CAN'T (HIC)-- CAN'T TALK!
THAT WITCH-MAN'S MAGIC-- (HIC)-- MAGIC DUST HAS GIVEN-- (HIC)-- GIVEN ME-- (HIC)-- HICCUPS!!
SORRY, O RULER OF THE RIDICULOUS--
--NO PASSWORDS-- NO MAGIC!
SAY, YOU IDIOT-- DO YOU-- (HIC)-- WANT THOSE MONSTERS TO (HIC)-- TRAMPLE US INTO-- (HIC)-- CORNMASH?
DO SOMETHIN'!
THEM WAS THE WORDS, CHIEF!
THE BEMUSED THUNDERBOLT STUDIES THE ONRUSHING HERD--
--THEN, WITH A CASUAL WAVE OF HIS HAND, HE TURNS THEM INTO...
--BUTTERFLIES!? YOU GOTTA BE KIDDIN'!
LOOK-- I DON'T TELL YOU HOW TO RUN YOUR BUSINESS, DO I?
BESIDES-- THOSE BISON WILL CHANGE BACK TO NORMAL-- WHEN THEY'VE CALMED DOWN!
MEBBE SO-- BUT WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO ABOUT THEM?
UH, THAT CREW--! I'LL JUST...
SMOKE--? WE'RE FADIN' AWAY!
THUNDERBOLT, IS THIS YOUR DOING?
SORRY, PRETTY LADY-- BUT I CAN'T TAKE CREDIT FOR THIS ONE!
THEN IT MUST BE ORACLE! OUR MISSION HERE IS FINISHED--
--AND HE'S BRINGING US-- HOME!
7

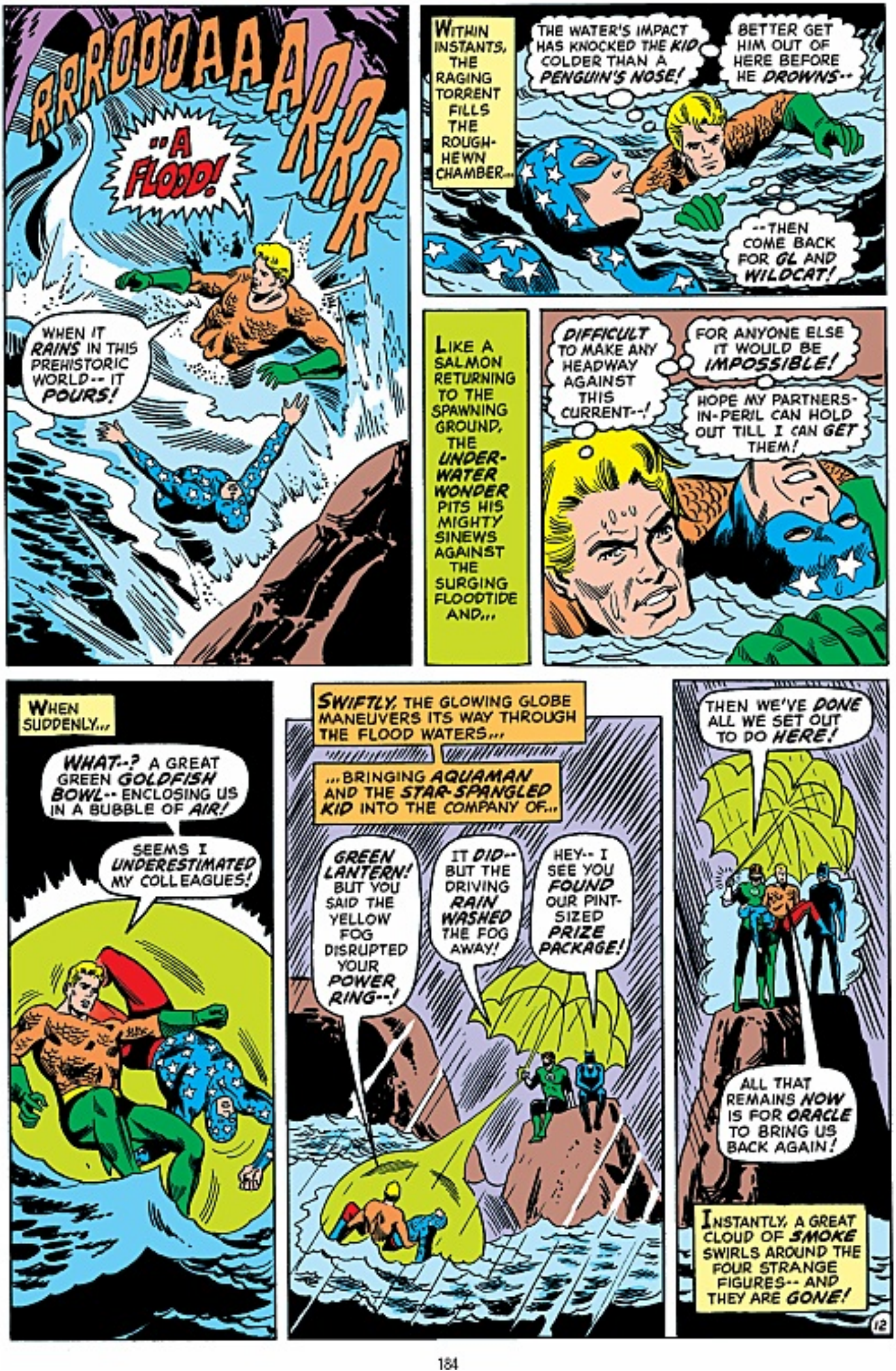
MEANWHILE-- CENTURIES AWAY-- THREE MORE STRANGELY-GARBED MEN HURTLE THROUGH THE MISTY SKY, THEIR EYES CAREFULLY SCANNING THE PREHISTORIC TERRAIN BELOW...
AQUAMAN
WILDCAT
and
GREEN LANTERN
STILL NO HINT OF WHERE WE'VE ENDED UP, WILDCAT?
'FRAID NOT, AQUAMAN! YOU CAN'T TELL ONE ROCK FROM ANOTHER DOWN THERE!
HEY--! LOOKS LIKE THERE'S MORE THAN A RAMBLING ROCK-GARDEN BELOW US!
CAVEMEN-- CRO-MAGNON-- FROM THE LOOKS OF 'EM!
WELL--AT LEAST WE KNOW WHEN WE ARE!... 50,000 YEARS IN THE PAST!
APPEARS THEY'VE CORNERED SOME WILD ANIMAL IN THAT CAVE!
THAT'S NO WILD ANIMAL, LANTERN--
IT'S THE STAR-SPANGLED KID!
8

BUT AS THE DAUNTLESS TRIO SWOOPS GROUNDWARD TO INVESTIGATE...
BRACE YOURSELVES! WE'RE GONNA SPLATTER!
UNNNFF!
WHEN THE HAPLESS HEROES REGAIN THEIR FEET...
WHAT THE HECK HAPPENED TO YOUR POWER RING, LANTERN?
FORGET TO RE-CHARGE IT?
NO-- IT'S THIS BLASTED YELLOW FOG! THE AREA IS THICK WITH IT--
--AND MY RING IS POWERLESS AGAINST THAT PARTICULAR COLOR!
FELLAS-- TAKE A PEEK OVER THERE!
UH-OH-- WITHOUT MY RING TO BACK US UP, WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO FIGHT OUR WAY INTO THAT CAVE!
FIGHT--? THAT'S MY SPECIALTY!
GET READY TO FOLLOW MY LEAD!
IF WE CAN'T GO PAST THESE GUYS--
--WE'RE GONNA GO THROUGH 'EM!
UNGGHH!
A SUDDEN MOTION FROM THE SHADOWS-- AND...
BRAAA-A-RRGGHHHH
HERE COMES SOMEBODY WHO WANTS TO ARGUE THE POINT, WILDCAT!
AND IT'LL BE ROUGH ON ANYONE WHO DISAGREES WITH HIM!
9


RRAAH
AGGH
WELL, I DISAGREE WITH HIM--
--AND I WANT TO KNOW HOW HIS ARGUMENTS STAND UP AGAINST COLD, HARD FACTS!
UNNFF!
THWUD
FACT ONE: THIS PREHISTORIC GOLIATH MOVES LIKE A WEEK'S SUPPLY OF EXHAUSTED MOLASSES!
KKRUNCH-H
FACT TWO: HE'S ARGUING WITH THE EX-HEAVY-WEIGHT CHAMPION OF THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD--
--AND I DON'T LIKE TO LOSE AN ARGUMENT!

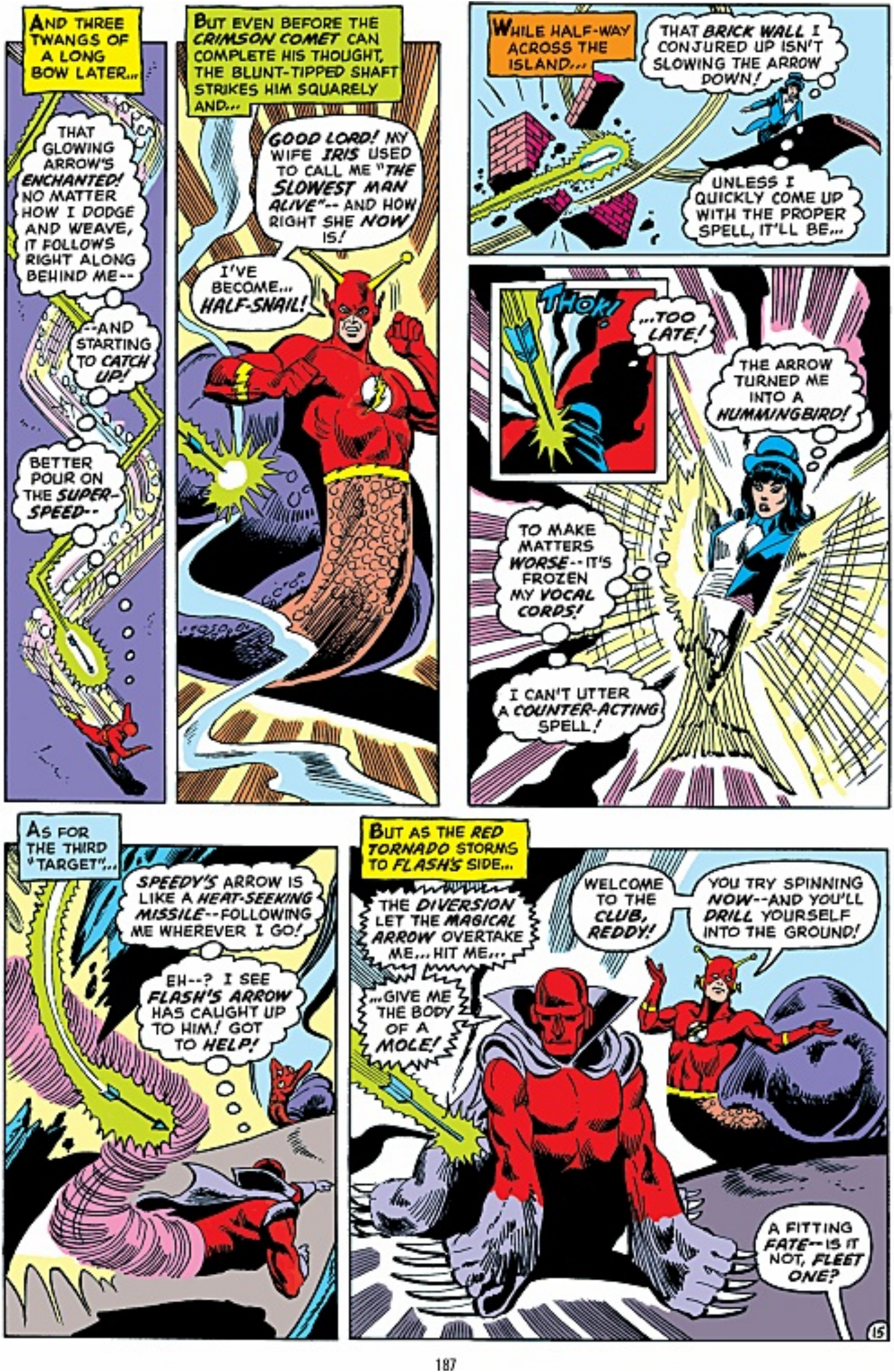

HEY--WHERE'S EVERYBODY GOING? I THOUGHT THEY WANTED TO FIGHT!
OKAY, WILDCAT--YOU MADE YOUR POINT!
NOW SUPPOSE WE START SEARCHING FOR THE STAR-SPANGLED KID?
WHY NOT? IT'S BEGINNING TO RAIN OUT HERE ANYWAY!
10

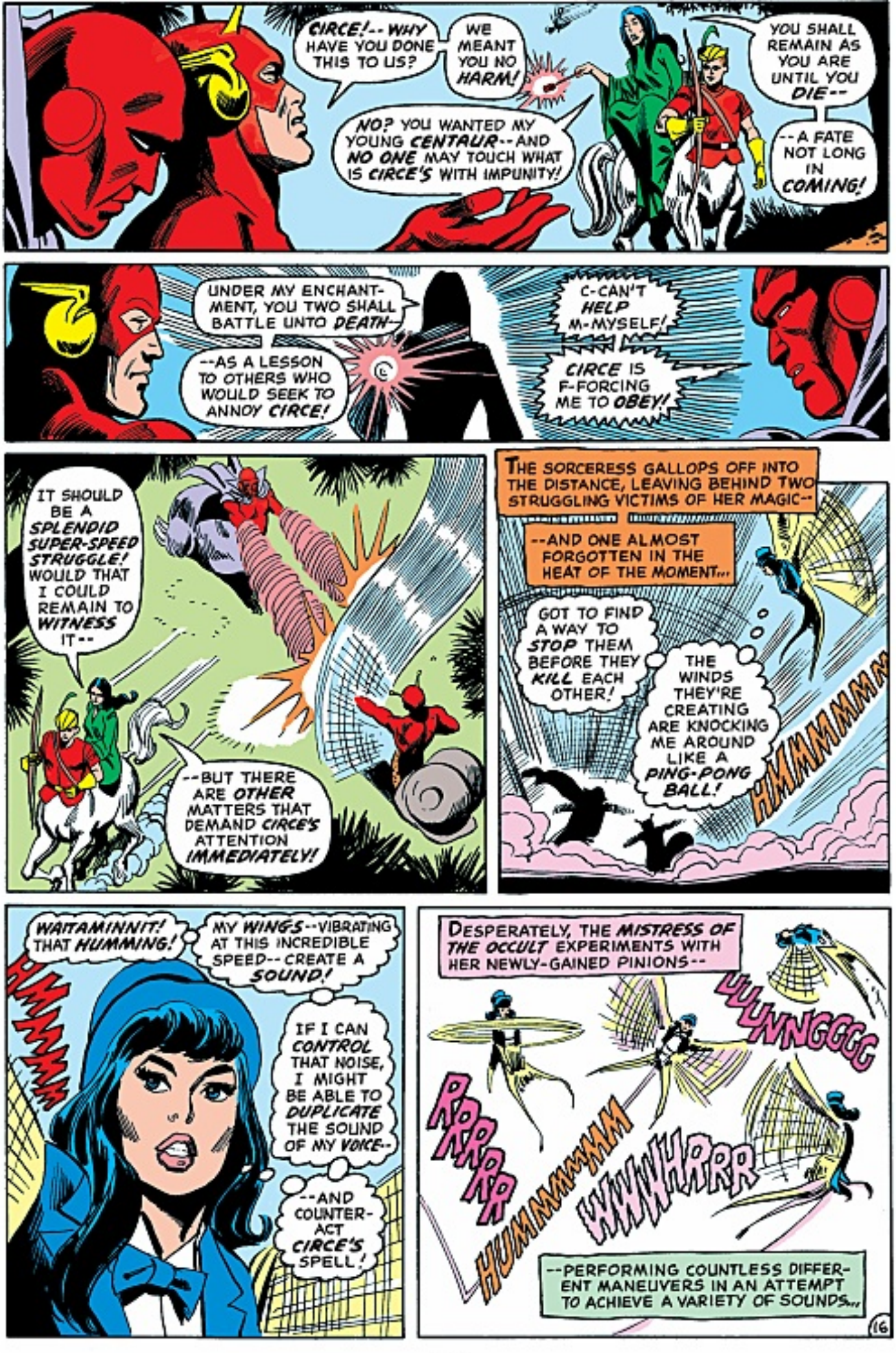

MOMENTS LATER-- WITHIN THE GREAT STONE CHAMBER...
SO THAT'S HOW THE KID MANAGED THAT ILLUSION--!
A PRIMITIVE PROJECTOR-- MADE OF QUARTZ AND SCRAP MATERIAL!
INGENIOUS! BUT WHERE IS THE KID HIMSELF!
HIDING IN ONE OF THOSE SIDE TUNNELS, I BET!
YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT! THE QUESTION IS-- WHY?
WE FIND THE ANSWER TO THAT WHEN WE FIND THE STAR-SPANGLED KID!
CHECKING THIS MAZE OUT COULD TAKE FOREVER!
LET'S EACH TAKE A DIFFERENT TUNNEL-- AND MEET BACK HERE WHEN WE'VE MADE THE ROUNDS!
LONG MINUTES PASS-- AS THE THREE ADVENTURERS SCOUR THE CAVERN'S COUNTLESS CORRIDORS...
..UNTIL, AT LAST, THE SEA KING SPIES...
SOMETHING IN THE SHADOWS UP AHEAD--!
-- THE STAR-SPANGLED KID!
WHO--? THANK THE STARS-- A FELLOW HUMAN BEING!
BUT NOW-- HOW'D YOU FIND ME HERE?
I'LL EXPLAIN THAT LATER! WHAT I WANT TO KNOW NOW IS--
--WHY HAVE YOU BEEN HIDING IN THIS CAVE?
TO PROTECT THE FUTURE OF THE HUMAN RACE!
I'VE GOT A TERRIBLE CASE OF FLU! IF EVEN ONE OF THOSE PRIMITIVE ANCESTORS OF OURS WERE TO CATCH THE DISEASE FROM ME AND DIE--
--IT COULD ALTER THE COURSE OF HISTORY!
RRRRMMMM
SHHHHHSSSHH! THAT RUMBLING NOISE--
SOUNDS LIKE...


RRROOOAAARRR
...A FLOOD!
WHEN IT RAINS IN THIS PREHISTORIC WORLD-- IT POURS!
WITHIN INSTANTS, THE RAGING TORRENT FILLS THE ROUGH-HEWN CHAMBER...
THE WATER'S IMPACT HAS KNOCKED THE KID COLDER THAN A PENGUIN'S NOSE!
BETTER GET HIM OUT OF HERE BEFORE HE DROWNS--
--THEN COME BACK FOR GL AND WILDCAT!
LIKE A SALMON RETURNING TO THE SPAWNING GROUND, THE UNDER-WATER WONDER PITS HIS MIGHTY SINEWS AGAINST THE SURGING FLOODTIDE AND...
DIFFICULT TO MAKE ANY HEADWAY AGAINST THIS CURRENT--!
FOR ANYONE ELSE IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE!
HOPE MY PARTNERS-IN-PERIL CAN HOLD OUT TILL I CAN GET THEM!
WHEN SUDDENLY...
WHAT--? A GREAT GREEN GOLDFISH BOWL-- ENCLOSING US IN A BUBBLE OF AIR!
SEEMS I UNDERESTIMATED MY COLLEAGUES!
SWIFTLY, THE GLOWING GLOBE MANEUVERS ITS WAY THROUGH THE FLOOD WATERS...
...BRINGING AQUAMAN AND THE STAR-SPANGLED KID INTO THE COMPANY OF...
GREEN LANTERN! BUT YOU SAID THE YELLOW FOG DISRUPTED YOUR POWER RING--!
IT DID-- BUT THE DRIVING RAIN WASHED THE FOG AWAY!
HEY-- I SEE YOU FOUND OUR PINT-SIZED PRIZE PACKAGE!
THEN WE'VE DONE ALL WE SET OUT TO DO HERE!
ALL THAT REMAINS NOW IS FOR ORACLE TO BRING US BACK AGAIN!
INSTANTLY, A GREAT CLOUD OF SMOKE SWIRLS AROUND THE FOUR STRANGE FIGURES-- AND THEY ARE GONE!
12

LET US ADJUST THE CURTAIN OF TIME-AND-SPACE TO FOCUS ON THREE MORE OF OUR CENTURY-SPANNING SEARCHERS AS THEY STEP BACK ONTO THE PLANE OF REALITY...
The FLASH, ZATANNA, THE MAGICIAN, and THE RED TORNADO
WOW--THAT WAS QUITE A RIDE!
WHERE DID ORACLE DEPOSIT US?
MY RELATIVITY-SENSORS INDICATE WE'VE LANDED ON A SMALL MEDITERRANEAN ISLAND, ZATANNA!
IN THAT CASE, IT SHOULDN'T TAKE ME MORE THAN A FEW SECONDS TO CHECK THE ISLAND FOR OUR MISSING SOLDIER!
WAIT HERE--I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!
WHAT--AND MISS ALL THE FUN?
HANG ON, FLASH--WE'RE COMING WITH YOU!
CIGAM TEPRAC RAEPPA!*
*EDITOR'S NOTE! READ ZATANNA'S MYSTIC COMMANDS BACKWARDS!
AND A SUPER-SPEED SCRUTINY OF THE SMALL ISLE REVEALS...
LOOK! ON THE CREST OF THAT HILL--
--THE OBJECT OF OUR QUEST!
RIGHT, RED TORNADO--THAT'S OUR BOY!
SPEEDY! HEY--SPEEDY--OVER HERE! YOU'VE GOT COMPANY!
BUT AS THE BOY BOWMAN MOVES TOWARD HIS THREE FRIENDLY PURSUERS...
EEEEEK! S-SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO HIM! HE... HE'S...
--SPEEDY HAS BECOME A CENTAUR!
13

WHAT SORCERY COULD HAVE CAUSED SUCH A..?
HEADS UP, ZATANNA--OR YOU MAY NOT LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO FIND OUT!
CEASE! WHO DARES TRESPASS UPON THE ISLE OF AEAEA?
WHAT--?!
I AM THE SORCERESS--CIRCE--
--AND THESE ARE MY FAITHFUL SERVANTS!
OF COURSE! ACCORDING TO GREEK LEGEND, CIRCE HAD THE POWER TO TURN ORDINARY MEN INTO HYBRID ANIMALS!
THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO SPEEDY!
QUITE CORRECT, WENCH--HE IS FAR MORE MANAGEABLE THIS WAY!
BUT WHAT DO YOU WANT HERE ON CIRCE'S ISLE?
WE HAVE COME FOR HIM, SORCERESS--THE CENTAUR WHO STANDS BESIDE YOU!
RETURN HIM TO HIS NORMAL STATE--AND WE WILL LEAVE YOU IN PEACE!
CERTAINLY, SPAWN OF MERCURY! IF YOU WANT YOUR FRIEND'S COMPANIONSHIP SO DEARLY, YOU SHALL HAVE IT...
...BY JOINING HIM IN MY MENAGERIE!
BRACE YOURSELVES, GROUP--SHE'S PLANNING SOMETHING TRICKY!
INDEED I AM! I'VE ENCHANTED THE YOUNG BOWMAN'S SHAFTS!
SHOULD AN ARROW SO MUCH AS TOUCH YOU--YOU SHALL BECOME THAT WHICH IS MOST REPUGNANT TO YOU!
SHE MEANS IT!
EVERYONE--SCATTER! SPEEDY CAN'T HIT ALL OF US!
14


AND THREE TWANGS OF A LONG BOW LATER...
THAT GLOWING ARROW'S ENCHANTED! NO MATTER HOW I DODGE AND WEAVE, IT FOLLOWS RIGHT ALONG BEHIND ME--
--AND STARTING TO CATCH UP!
BETTER POUR ON THE SUPER-SPEED--
BUT EVEN BEFORE THE CRIMSON COMET CAN COMPLETE HIS THOUGHT, THE BLUNT-TIPPED SHAFT STRIKES HIM SQUARELY AND...
GOOD LORD! MY WIFE IRIS USED TO CALL ME "THE SLOWEST MAN ALIVE"-- AND HOW RIGHT SHE NOW IS!
I'VE BECOME... HALF-SNAIL!
WHILE HALF-WAY ACROSS THE ISLAND...
THAT BRICK WALL I CONJURED UP ISN'T SLOWING THE ARROW DOWN!
UNLESS I QUICKLY COME UP WITH THE PROPER SPELL, IT'LL BE...
THOK!
...TOO LATE!
THE ARROW TURNED ME INTO A HUMMINGBIRD!
TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE-- IT'S FROZEN MY VOCAL CORDS!
I CAN'T UTTER A COUNTER-ACTING SPELL!
AS FOR THE THIRD "TARGET"...
SPEEDY'S ARROW IS LIKE A HEAT-SEEKING MISSILE--FOLLOWING ME WHEREVER I GO!
EH--? I SEE FLASH'S ARROW HAS CAUGHT UP TO HIM! GOT TO HELP!
BUT AS THE RED TORNADO STORMS TO FLASH'S SIDE...
THE DIVERSION LET THE MAGICAL ARROW OVERTAKE ME... HIT ME...
...GIVE ME THE BODY OF A MOLE!
WELCOME TO THE CLUB, REDDY!
YOU TRY SPINNING NOW--AND YOU'LL DRILL YOURSELF INTO THE GROUND!
A FITTING FATE-- IS IT NOT, FLEET ONE?
15


CIRCE!-- WHY HAVE YOU DONE THIS TO US?
WE MEANT YOU NO HARM!
YOU SHALL REMAIN AS YOU ARE UNTIL YOU DIE--
NO? YOU WANTED MY YOUNG CENTAUR-- AND NO ONE MAY TOUCH WHAT IS CIRCE'S WITH IMPUNITY!
--A FATE NOT LONG IN COMING!
UNDER MY ENCHANTMENT, YOU TWO SHALL BATTLE UNTO DEATH--
--AS A LESSON TO OTHERS WHO WOULD SEEK TO ANNOY CIRCE!
C-CAN'T HELP M-MYSELF!
CIRCE IS F-FORCING ME TO OBEY!
IT SHOULD BE A SPLENDID SUPER-SPEED STRUGGLE! WOULD THAT I COULD REMAIN TO WITNESS IT--
--BUT THERE ARE OTHER MATTERS THAT DEMAND CIRCE'S ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY!
THE SORCERESS GALLOPS OFF INTO THE DISTANCE, LEAVING BEHIND TWO STRUGGLING VICTIMS OF HER MAGIC--
--AND ONE ALMOST FORGOTTEN IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT...
GOT TO FIND A WAY TO STOP THEM BEFORE THEY KILL EACH OTHER!
THE WINDS THEY'RE CREATING ARE KNOCKING ME AROUND LIKE A PING-PONG BALL!
HMMMMMM
WAITAMINNIT! THAT HUMMING!
HMMMM
MY WINGS--VIBRATING AT THIS INCREDIBLE SPEED-- CREATE A SOUND!
IF I CAN CONTROL THAT NOISE, I MIGHT BE ABLE TO DUPLICATE THE SOUND OF MY VOICE--
--AND COUNTER-ACT CIRCE'S SPELL!
DESPERATELY, THE MISTRESS OF THE OCCULT EXPERIMENTS WITH HER NEWLY-GAINED PINIONS--
UUUNNGGGG
RRRRR
HUMMMMMMM
WWWHRRR
--PERFORMING COUNTLESS DIFFERENT MANEUVERS IN AN ATTEMPT TO ACHIEVE A VARIETY OF SOUNDS...
16

UNTIL AT LAST...
CIGAM FO ECRIC ENOGEB!
THANK THE STARS-- IT'S WORKING!
FLASH AND RED TORNADO ARE RETURNING TO NORMAL!
AND AS CIRCE'S MAGIC WEARS OFF ZATANNA HERSELF...
THANKS FOR THE HANDY NET, FLASH! IT'S DIFFICULT STAYING ALOFT WITHOUT WINGS!
SO I NOTICED! DO ME A FAVOR, ZATANNA?
NEXT TIME YOU CANCEL AN ENCHANTMENT--MAKE SURE YOU'RE STANDING ON THE GROUND!
NEED I REMIND YOU-- WE STILL HAVE SPEEDY TO RESCUE!
I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN, TORNADO! IN FACT, I'VE FIGURED OUT HOW TO DO IT!
A SHORT WHILE LATER-- IN THE GRACIOUS TEMPLE THAT IS THE ISLAND'S SOLE STRUCTURE...
I'VE COME BACK FOR MY FRIEND, CIRCE--AND THIS TIME I'M TAKING HIM!
'TIS YOU AGAIN, SCARLET ONE? YOU LEARN YOUR LESSONS HARD!
FOR YOUR INSOLENCE, I WILL TURN YOU INTO A LOWLY EARTHWORM!
I WOULDN'T DO THAT, SORCERESS-- HIS WIFE WOULDN'T LIKE IT!
AND I'LL TAKE YOUR WAND-- YOU'RE TOO DANGEROUS TO HAVE A LOADED WEAPON!
NO-- IT CANNOT BE--?
WHY SAY THAT, CIRCE-- WHEN IT OBVIOUSLY IS?
ECRIC EMOCEB DEZYLARAP!
AT ZATANNA'S COMMAND, CIRCE BECOMES MOTIONLESS-- AND ALMOST INSTANTLY...
WHERE AM I? WH-WHAT'S HAPPENED?
WHO--WHO ARE YOU?
IT'S A LONG STORY, SPEEDY-- WE'LL FILL YOU IN LATER!
RIGHT NOW, WE HAVE TO DISPOSE OF CIRCE!
I'VE TAKEN CARE OF THAT, FLASH!
WITHOUT HER WAND, SHE IS POWERLESS!

WITH HER WAND NO MORE, CIRCE'S "PETS" ARE REGAINING THEIR TRUE FORMS!
THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO KEEP US HERE...
...EXCEPT FOR THE PROBLEM HOW TO FIND OUR WAY BACK HOME!
SUDDENLY...
LOOKS LIKE ORACLE SOLVED THAT PROBLEM FOR US -- WE'RE FADING OUT!
HEY!...WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS!
YOU WILL, YOUNGSTER -- ASSUMING WE RETURN TO OUR WORLD -- IN TIME!
IN THE HANDS OF ALL-KNOWING ORACLE, TIME IS A CELESTIAL CLAY TO BE SCULPTURED AS HE SEES FIT...
NOW HE FOLDS THE CLAY IN UPON ITSELF, GATHERING THE SCATTERED EDGES -- BRINGING THE GREATEST ASSORTMENT OF SUPER-BEINGS EVER RECORDED TO THE JUSTICE SOCIETY'S SANCTUARY...
ALL PRESENT AND ACCOUNTED FOR!
THE SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY TOGETHER ONCE AGAIN!
BUT -- IF THE SEVEN SOLDIERS ARE ALL HERE --
-- WHO IS BURIED IN THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER'S TOMB?
18

WE CAN ANSWER THAT, JOHNNY!
GREEN LANTERN-- ROBIN-- MR. TERRIFIC--! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
TO THE TOP OF THE HIMALAYAS-- WHERE WE DISCOVERED...
NO, FRIEND--
--LET ME TELL EVERYONE WHAT YOU FOUND!
THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER OF VICTORY IS MY AIDE AND COMPANION-- WING!
IT WAS HE WHO DIED TO DEFEAT THE NEBULA-MAN--
--AND IF THERE IS ANY JUSTICE IN THIS WORLD, HE WAS BURIED WHERE HE FELL -- WITH HONORS!
HE WAS, INDEED, CRIMSON AVENGER!
HOLY MEN FROM A NEARBY TEMPLE WITNESSED THE BATTLE--AND LAID YOUR FRIEND TO REST WHEN IT WAS OVER!
HE WAS AS BRAVE A MAN AS EVER LIVED! YOU'VE A RIGHT TO BE PROUD OF HIM!
NOBODY'LL LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO BE PROUD--UNLESS WE GET TO WORK REBUILDING THE WEAPON THAT WING USED TO DEFEAT THE NEBULA-MAN!
YOU'LL DO NOTHING, FRIENDS--
--IF YOU VALUE THIS PRETTY LADY'S LIFE!
WHO?
19

DIANA--?
AND THE IRON HAND-- OUR OLD ARCH-ENEMY!
BUT THAT JASPER'S S'POSED T'BE DEAD!
NOT DEAD, VIGILANTE-- MERELY DAMAGED-- WITH AN IRON HAND AS PROOF!
WHUM
PFF
AN IRON HAND THAT SHALL SCATTER DIANA PRINCE ALL OVER THE COUNTRYSIDE--
--IF ANYONE HERE IS SO FOOLISH AS TO MAKE A THREATENING MOVE TOWARDS ME--!
AND IN CASE YOU DOUBT MY HAND'S POWER--!
P-PLEASE... YOU WOULDN'T--!
OHHH-- I THINK I'M GOING TO-- FAINT--!
HUH?
FOR AN INSTANT THE IRON HAND IS DISTRACTED...
...AND THAT INSTANT IS ALL DIANA (WONDER WOMAN) PRINCE NEEDS...
M-MY MECHANICAL HAND--! YOU'VE SEVERED IT!
WHOK
KZZLATT
CONSIDER YOURSELF LUCKY! I COULD HAVE DONE THAT TO YOUR NECK!
AARRRRG
GG
20

COSTUMED OR NOT, YOU'RE STILL A WONDER, DIANA!
SAVE THE COMPLIMENTS FOR LATER, BATMAN! RIGHT NOW WE NEED INFORMATION!
TALK, IRON MOUTH --TELL US HOW TO STOP THAT COLOSSAL HAND OF YOURS--
--OR I'LL TAKE YOU APART A BONE AT A TIME!
DO WHAT YOU WANT, LADY-- IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE-- NOW!
THE CONTROLS WERE IN MY SHATTERED HAND! I COULDN'T DEACTIVATE MY CREATION NOW--EVEN IF I WANTED TO!
WE'RE DOOMED, YOU BLOODY FOOLS-- EVERYONE IS DOOMED!
PERHAPS NOT, VILLAIN--
--IF THE SEVEN SOLDIERS CAN RECREATE THE WEAPON THEY BUILT TO DESTROY YOUR EARLIER MENACE-- THE NEBULA-MAN!
WHAT SAY YOU, SOLDIERS--CAN IT BE DONE?
IT'S A QUESTION OF TIME!
THE WEAPON ITSELF IS A LIGHTNING ROD OF SORTS-- GATHERING NEBULOID-ENERGY FROM SPACE-- THEN CHANNELING IT AGAINST THE OPPOSING NEBULA THREAT--
--BUT IT TAKES TIME TO CHARGE COMPLETELY-- MORE TIME THAN WE HAVE!
YOU JUST BUILD THE NEBULA-ROD, KID!
LET US WORRY ABOUT CHARGING IT!
IT'S A DEAL! I'LL GET YOU A LIST OF THE MATERIALS WE'LL NEED!
21

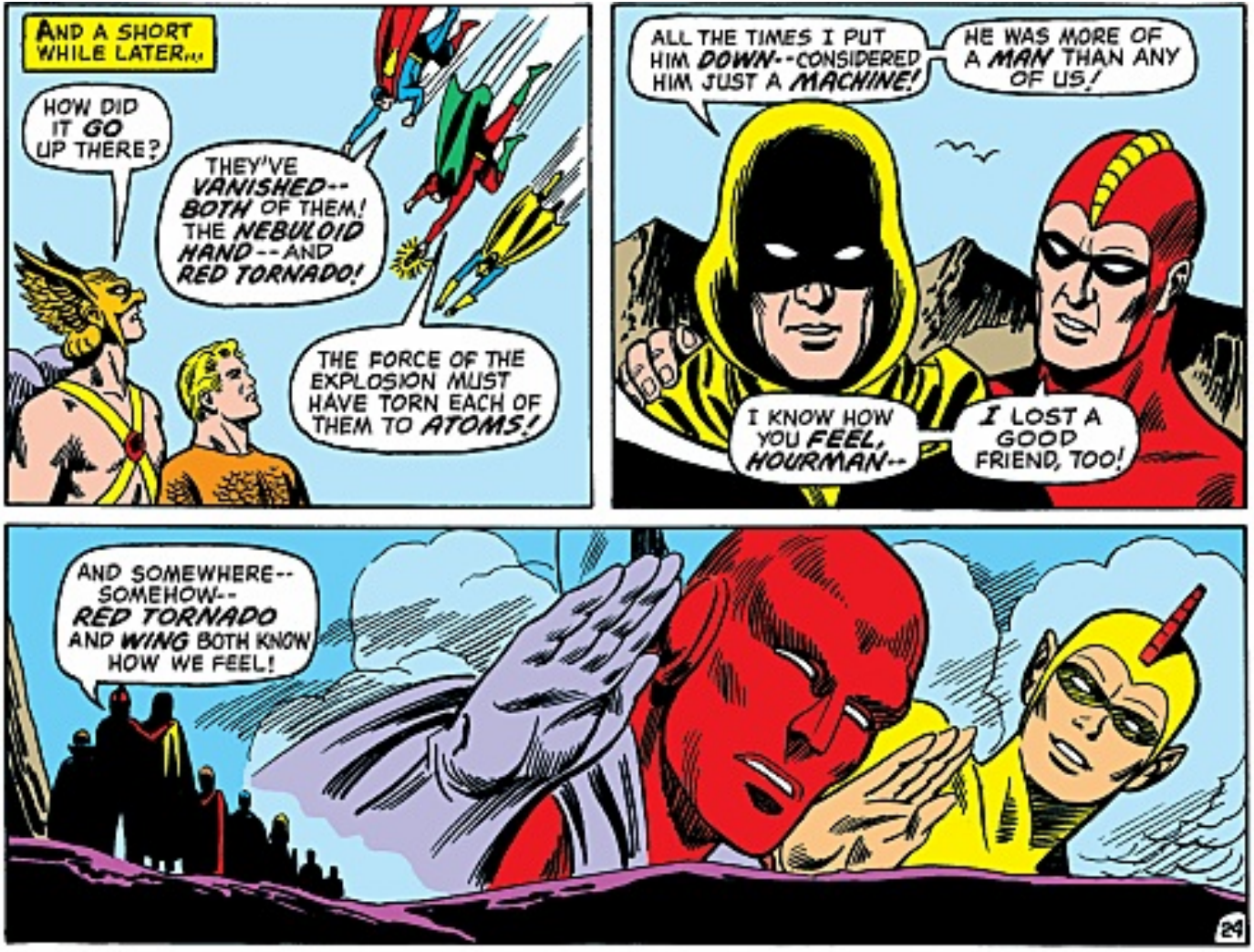
THE TICKING OF THE CLOCK IS A STACCATO DEATH KNELL AS THE GREATEST HEROES OF TWO WORLDS ARE PUT TO THE TEST...
SWIFTLY, THE GENIUS OF THE STAR-SPANGLED KID AND HIS FELLOW SOLDIERS OF VICTORY RECONSTRUCT THE AMAZING NEBULA-ROD--
THEN THE COMPLETED WEAPON IS GIVEN INTO THE WAITING HANDS OF SUPERMAN-- TO BE CARRIED INTO THE ENDLESS DEPTHS OF SPACE...
THERE TO BE CHARGED WITH THE AWESOME ENERGIES OF THE UNIVERSE...

AND AT LAST, MANKIND'S FINAL HOPE OF SURVIVAL STANDS READY TO USE...
THE NEBULA-ROD MUST BE DELIVERED BY HAND INTO THE HEART OF THE MENACE...
--BUT THAT PRODUCES A MAJOR PROBLEM--
--FOR NOTHING HUMAN COULD SURVIVE THE RESULTING EXPLOSION!

THAT'S NO PROBLEM-- I'M INVULNERABLE TO EVERYTHING...OWW!
EVERYTHING SAVE MAGIC, SUPERMAN!
THEN I'LL GO! MY POWER RING WILL PROTECT ME FROM THE BLAST!
SO WOULD MINE! WHY SHOULDN'T I GO?

BUT NEITHER OF YOUR RINGS WOULD PROTECT YOU FROM THIS--
--A YELLOW WOODEN ARROW--A COMBINATION OF BOTH YOUR WEAKNESSES!
NOR WOULD MERLIN'S MAGIC ARMOR PROTECT ME FROM DESTRUCTION!
THEN WHAT EXACTLY CAN WE DO?
22

NOTHING! THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN SOLVED FOR US.
WHAT--? THE NEBULA-ROD IS GONE--
--AND SO IS THE RED TORNADO!
OH, NO! HE--HE COULDN'T HAVE--!
BUT HE DID! HE TOOK THE NEBULA-ROD--
--AND LEFT THIS NOTE IN ITS PLACE!
WHAT DOES IT SAY, BATMAN?
"MY FRIENDS... WHEN YOU READ THIS... IT WILL BE TOO LATE TO STOP ME..."
"I HAVE TAKEN THE NEBULA-ROD...AND GONE TO FACE MY DESTINY... ALONE!"
"YOU SAID NOTHING HUMAN COULD DO WHAT MUST BE DONE...AND SURVIVE..."
"THEN PERHAPS I HAVE A BETTER CHANCE THAN MOST..."
"AN ANDROID IS NOT HUMAN..."
"IF I PERISH... ALL THAT WILL BE LOST IS SOME CIRCUITRY AND GEARS..."
"IF I AM SUCCESSFUL... I WILL SEE YOU ALL SOON..."
"IF I AM NOT... REMEMBER ME..."
"YOUR FRIEND ... RED TORNADO!"
THAT'S ALL IT SAYS...
M-MAYBE IT'S NOT TOO LATE--! MAYBE THERE'S STILL TIME TO HELP HIM--
KWA-RA-RA-RA-ROOOM
AND THE SOUNDS OF MUFFLED WEEPING ARE LOST AMID THE ECHOES OF THE BLAST!
I'M AFRAID... NOTHING CAN HELP HIM NOW!
23



The JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA

JOURNEY INTO DANGER WITH... **CHRISTOPHER CHANCE--**

A MAN OF STEEL-HARD NERVES AND HAIR-TRIGGER REFLEXES--WHO STANDS IN FOR PEOPLE MARKED FOR ***MURDER***... IN THE HOPE THAT HE CAN ***STOP*** A KILLER--BEFORE THE KILLER STOPS ***HIM***!

THE HUMAN TARGET

THE ASSASSIN-EXPRESS CONTRACT!

A NEW **ACTION-PLUS** FEATURE by:
LEN WEIN--WRITER; CARMINE INFANTINO & DICK GIORDANO--ARTISTS

MY PLACE IS ON BOSTON'S BEACON HILL--THE TOP TWO FLOORS OF A BRICK-FACED BUILDING ALSO OCCUPIED BY LUIGI'S RESTAURANT...
...SO WHEN SMITHERS ARRIVED, I WAS HOME...
BLAM! BLAM!
...HONING A FEW DULL EDGES ON MY PRIVATE SOUND-PROOFED RANGE!
SIGNOR CHRIS--THERE'S A MISTER SMITHERS HERE TO SEE YOU!
YOU'RE TOO EARLY, SMITHERS!
F-FORGIVE ME, MR. CHANCE--I JUST WANTED TO GET THIS OVER WITH!
I UNDERSTAND, SMITHERS! YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST TO FEEL THAT WAY!
GIVE ME A MINUTE OR TWO--AND I'LL BE RIGHT WITH YOU!
SWISH!
THUMP!
LUIGI, IF YOU WOULD BE SO KIND AS TO CLEAN UP--?
SIGNOR SMITHERS AND I HAVE BUSINESS TO TALK OVER!
YES--B-B-BUSINESS!

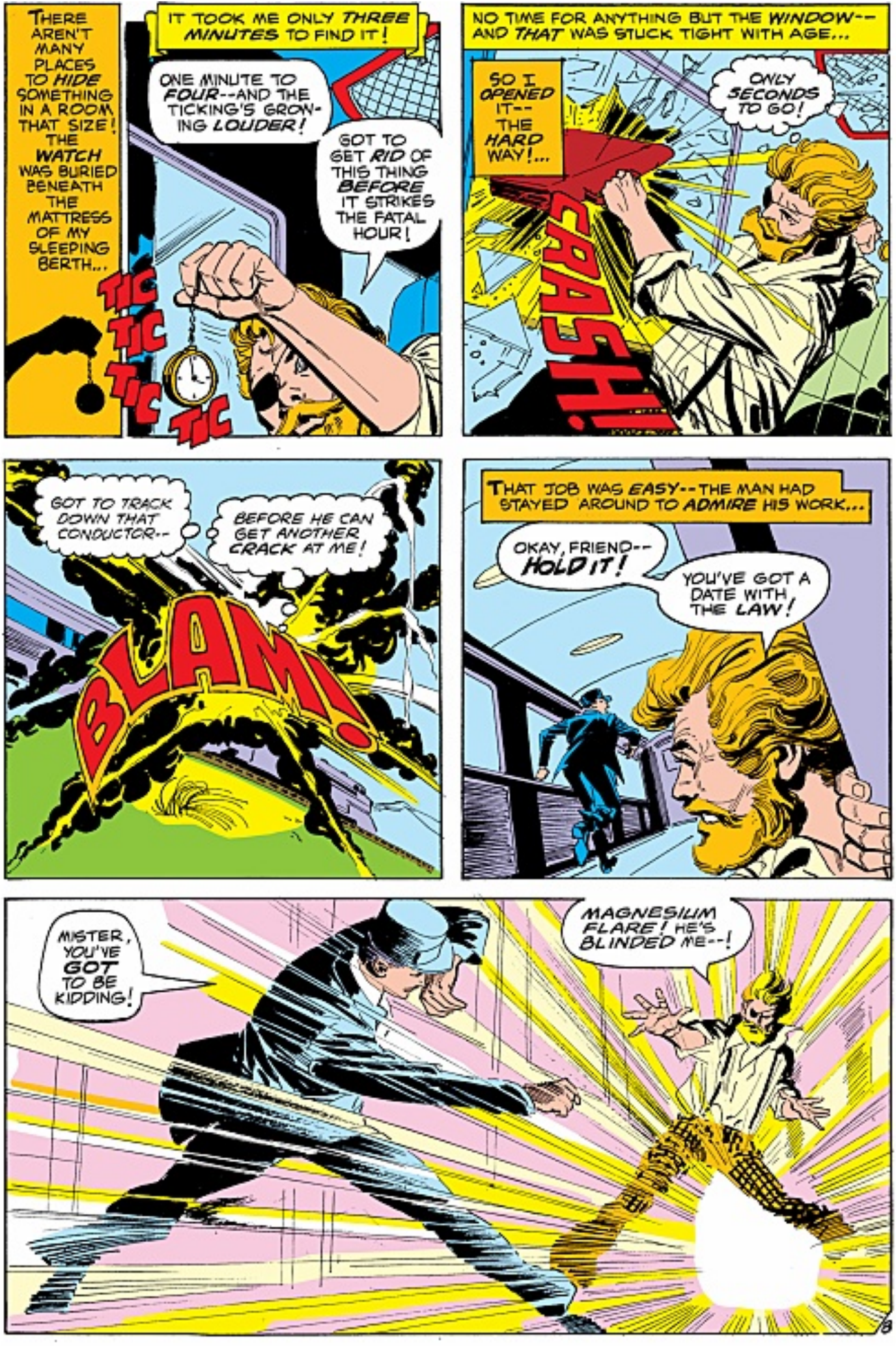
SHORTLY...
THE FAT MAN-- HE WORKS FOR YOU?
LUIGI? NO--JUST AN OCCASIONAL FAVOR!
IT'S A LONG STORY...
...AND RIGHT NOW I'M INTERESTED IN YOUR PROBLEM--
WHO WANTS TO KILL YOU-- AND WHY?
OH, NO--NOT ME! IT'S MR. NEWMAN THEY'RE AFTER--
T.C. NEWMAN-- PRESIDENT OF HORIZON CHEMICAL CORPORATION!
AND IT'S MY FAULT-- ALL MY--OHHH!
EASY, SMITHERS-- YOU'RE COMING APART AT THE SEAMS!
JUST SUPPLY THE DETAILS-- AND LET ME HANDLE THE WORRYING!
THAT'S WHAT I GET PAID FOR!
YOU MUST UNDERSTAND-- I DIDN'T MEAN FOR THIS TO HAPPEN-- BUT IT WAS MY ONLY CHANCE TO GET AHEAD IN THIS BUSINESS!
THAT'S NOTHING NEW-- AMBITION AND MURDER OFTEN WALK HAND IN HAND!
BUT--MURDER WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE PART OF THE DEAL!
YOU SEE--M-MR. NEWMAN IS GOING TO CALIFORNIA TOMORROW TO CLOSE A VITALLY-IMPORTANT MERGER--AND HE'LL BE CARRYING TOP SECRET PAPERS--
--PAPERS I THOUGHT I COULD STEAL!
IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME-- ONE COMPANY STEALING SECRETS FROM ANOTHER! WHY SHOULDN'T I HAVE MY CHANCE?
SO I HIRED AN INDUSTRIAL SPY TO SNATCH THE PAPERS FOR ME! TOO LATE, I FOUND OUT HE'S NOT A SPY...
...HE'S A PAID KILLER!
3

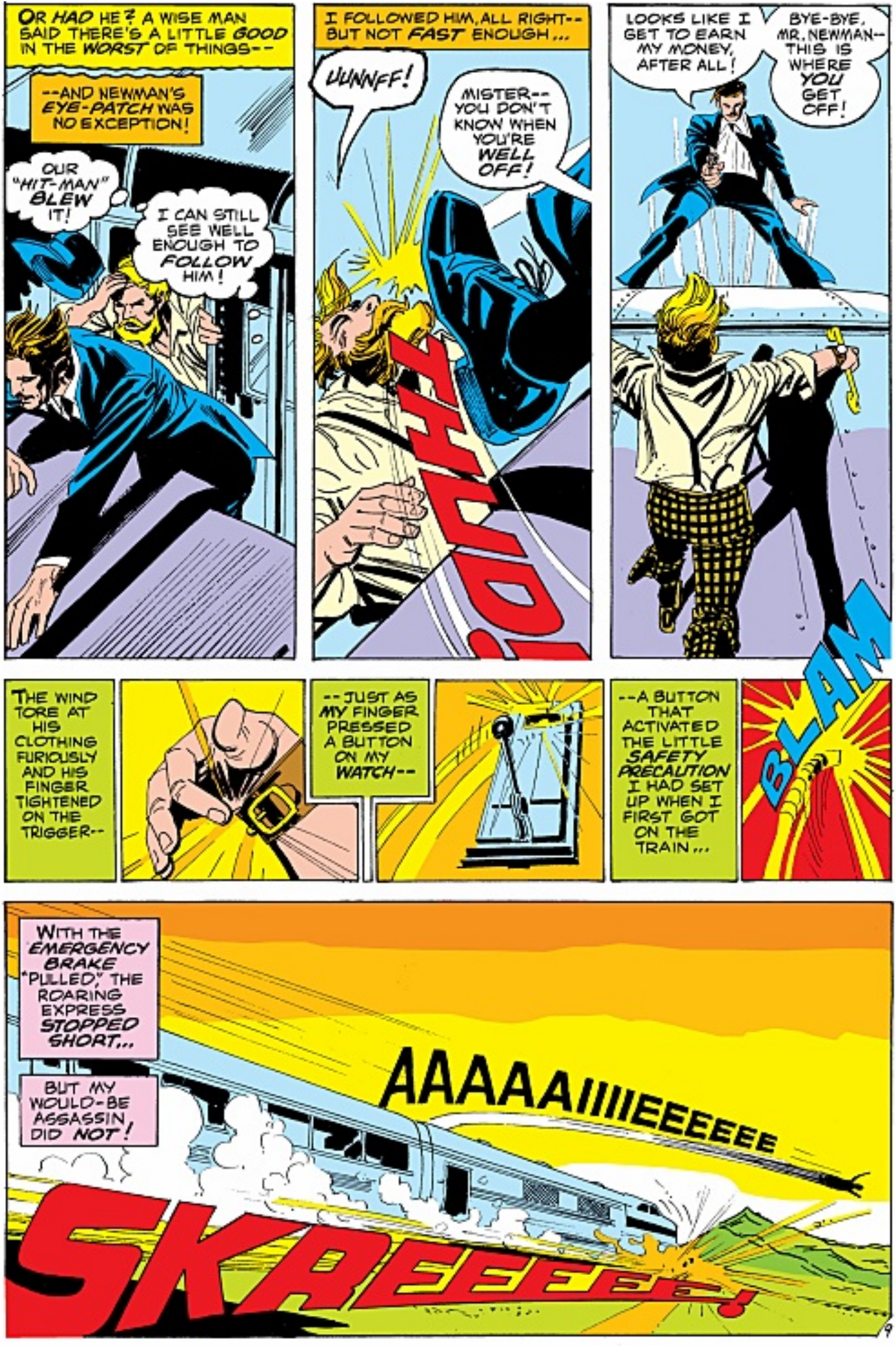
AND IF THERE WERE ANY WAY TO CALL YOUR BOY OFF, YOU WOULDN'T BE HERE --
--SO WHERE'S THE "HIT" GOING TO BE MADE?
MR. NEWMAN'S TAKING THE TRAIN ACROSS COUNTRY-- ABSOLUTELY REFUSES TO FLY--!
GOOD--THAT NARROWS THE POSSIBLE TARGET AREA! I ASSUME NEWMAN KNOWS YOU'VE CONTACTED ME?
FROM WHAT I REMEMBER OF HIM, HE HAS A FAIRLY EASY FACE TO DUPLICATE!
MR. NEWMAN WILL COOPERATE FULLY-- BUT HIS FACE MAY NOT BE SO EASY TO COPY!
HAVEN'T YOU SEEN THIS?
OH, NO! WHY THE DEVIL IS HE WEARING THAT EYE-PATCH?
BOSTON POST
CHEMICAL TYCOON INJURED
AN ACCIDENT AT THE OFFICE YESTERDAY!
SOME ENTERPRISING NEWS PHOTOGRAPHER THOUGHT IT WAS WORTH RECORDING!
FOR A MOMENT I CONSIDERED THE SITUATION-- THEN...
ALL RIGHT--I'LL TAKE THE CONTRACT! NEWMAN AND I WILL HAVE TO GET TOGETHER AND DISCUSS MY PLAN...
...AFTER YOU AND I DISCUSS THE MATTER OF MY FEE!
MY FEE WAS UNUSUALLY HIGH-- BUT SMITHERS DESERVED IT-- AND EVEN THEN, HE WAS ALMOST CRYING WITH RELIEF WHEN HE LEFT...
I SPENT THE REST OF THE AFTERNOON IN CONFERENCE WITH T.C. NEWMAN--AND BY LATE EVENING, EVERYTHING WAS READY...
WHEN THAT STREAMLINER PULLED OUT IN THE MORNING, A DIFFERENT NEWMAN WOULD BE ON IT!
4

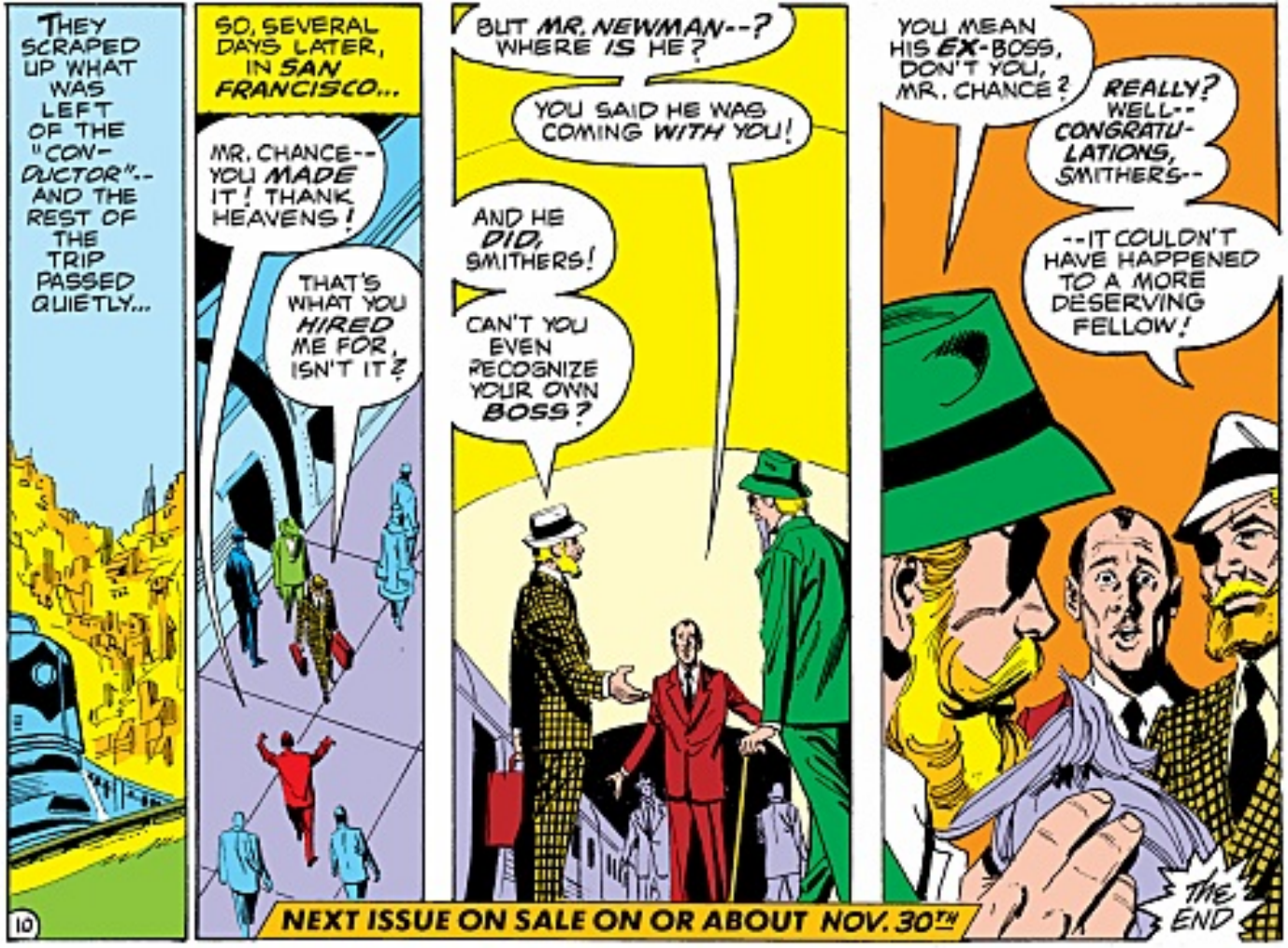
SOUTH STATION IS HECTIC IN THE MORNING--PEOPLE SCURRYING ABOUT, SEARCHING FOR THEIR TRAINS--PORTERS MANHANDLING AN ENDLESS SUPPLY OF LUGGAGE--
--AND SOMEWHERE IN THE CROWD, AN UNKNOWN KILLER--PATIENTLY STALKING HIS PREY...
EXCUSE ME, MR. CONDUCTOR--BUT WHEN DOES THIS TRAIN MAKE ITS FIRST SCHEDULED STOP?
AT 2:17 P.M. PRECISELY, MADAM! HAVE AN ENJOYABLE TRIP!
I STUDIED THE FACES OF THE PEOPLE AROUND ME AS I BOARDED THE TRAIN--WATCHING FOR A TOO-LONG LOOK, A TELL-TALE GESTURE...
...BUT NOT WATCHING WHERE I WAS GOING--!
OOFF!
MISTER--YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'M FINE, CONDUCTOR--NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT A LAW-SUIT!
LAWSUIT? MISTER, I'M ONLY GLAD THIS TRAIN WASN'T MOVING YET!
IF YOU'D GRABBED HOLD OF THAT EMERGENCY BRAKE-CORD WHILE WE WERE DOING SEVENTY--
--WE'D HAVE A LOT MORE TO WORRY ABOUT THAN A LAW-SUIT!
YOU HAVE MY WORD, CONDUCTOR--IF I BREAK YOUR PRECIOUS TRAIN--
I'LL BUY IT!
THAT'S ASSUMING SOMEONE ON THIS TRAIN DOESN'T BREAK ME FIRST!

THE PULLMAN WAS COMFORTABLE ENOUGH, AN OLDER CAR THAT HAD SEEN BETTER DAYS AND STILL CARRIED THE MEMORIES...
...AND THE MILES PASSED QUIETLY...
IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I'D SWEAR THE KILLER EXPECTS ME TO DIE OF BOREDOM!
RATTLE! RATTLE!
IT APPEARS I SPOKE TOO SOON! I'VE GOT AN UNINVITED GUEST!
WHEN THE KEY FINALLY TURNED IN THE LOCK, I WAS OUT OF THE LINE OF EXPECTED FIRE -- AND WAITING...
WHATEVER SMITHERS PAID THIS GUY, IT WAS TOO MUCH!
HE COULDN'T SNEAK UP ON A CORPSE!
SILENTLY, THE DOOR SWUNG INWARD -- AND...
FRIEND, IF YOU'RE NOT HERE TO MAKE UP MY BERTH--
--YOU'RE IN BIG TROUBLE!
WHAT--? W-WHAT'S GOING ON?
L-LOOK, BUDDY-- I MUST HAVE THE WRONG ROOM, IS ALL!
MY NAME'S HARRY CHEEVER-- FROM CHICAGO! I SELL RUBBER DUCKIES!
UNNN BUDDY-- HAVE A H-HEART! YOU'RE BREAKING MY OTHER ARM!
IF YOU'RE LYING TO ME, FRIEND-- I'LL BREAK BOTH YOUR LEGS, AS WELL!
FOR AN INSTANT, I STUDIED THE SWEATING MAN'S EYES-- BUT THEY HELD NO HINT OF A LIE...
ALMOST SHEEPISHLY, I LET HIM LOOSE...
FORGIVE ME, MR. CHEEVER-- BUT THESE ARE DANGEROUS TIMES!
YOU CAN'T BLAME ME FOR BEING CAREFUL!
IN THE FUTURE, I SUGGEST YOU KNOCK BEFORE YOU ENTER A ROOM!
IN THE FUTURE, BUDDY, I'M JUST GONNA TAKE A PLANE!
IT'S SAFER!
37
6

CHEEVER VANISHED DOWN THE PASSAGEWAY--AND BEFORE I COULD RETURN TO MY "WAITING GAME"...
MR. NEWMAN? I JUST FOUND OUT WHO YOU ARE AND...
WELL, I'VE COME TO APOLOGIZE FOR MY BEHAVIOR EARLIER!
APOLOGY ACCEPTED! COME IN FOR A MOMENT!
GEE-- THANKS!
ENJOYING YOUR TRIP SO FAR, SIR?
YES-- VERY MUCH-- WHICH REMINDS ME--
--WHEN IS OUR NEXT STOP?
5:47, MR. NEWMAN! WELL, IT'S TIME I GOT BACK TO WORK!
GOOD AFTERNOON, SIR--HOPE YOU HAVE A PLEASANT TRIP!
THE SHORT HAIRS AT THE BACK OF MY NECK-- BRISTLING!
A SURE SIGN SOMETHING ISN'T RIGHT!
SOMETHING'S BOTHERING ME ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR-- BUT WHAT?
SOMETHING WAS DIFFERENT ABOUT THE MAN-- SOMETHING WAS MISSING...
-- HIS POCKET WATCH! HE DIDN'T BOTHER TO CHECK IT WHEN HE TOLD ME THE TIME--
--BECAUSE HE DIDN'T HAVE IT WITH HIM!
AT LEAST-- NOT WHEN HE LEFT THIS CABIN!
HE'S HIDDEN IT HERE SOMEWHERE--
--AND MY SURVIVAL INSTINCT TELLS ME TO FIND IT-- FAST!
7


THERE AREN'T MANY PLACES TO HIDE SOMETHING IN A ROOM THAT SIZE! THE WATCH WAS BURIED BENEATH THE MATTRESS OF MY SLEEPING BERTH...
IT TOOK ME ONLY THREE MINUTES TO FIND IT!
ONE MINUTE TO FOUR--AND THE TICKING'S GROWING LOUDER!
GOT TO GET RID OF THIS THING BEFORE IT STRIKES THE FATAL HOUR!
TIC TIC TIC TIC
NO TIME FOR ANYTHING BUT THE WINDOW--AND THAT WAS STUCK TIGHT WITH AGE...
SO I OPENED IT-- THE HARD WAY!...
ONLY SECONDS TO GO!
CRASH!
GOT TO TRACK DOWN THAT CONDUCTOR--
BEFORE HE CAN GET ANOTHER CRACK AT ME!
BLAM!
THAT JOB WAS EASY--THE MAN HAD STAYED AROUND TO ADMIRE HIS WORK...
OKAY, FRIEND-- HOLD IT!
YOU'VE GOT A DATE WITH THE LAW!
MISTER, YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!
MAGNESIUM FLARE! HE'S BLINDED ME--!


OR HAD HE? A WISE MAN SAID THERE'S A LITTLE GOOD IN THE WORST OF THINGS--
--AND NEWMAN'S EYE-PATCH WAS NO EXCEPTION!
OUR "HIT-MAN" BLEW IT!
I CAN STILL SEE WELL ENOUGH TO FOLLOW HIM!
I FOLLOWED HIM, ALL RIGHT-- BUT NOT FAST ENOUGH...
UUNFF!
MISTER-- YOU DON'T KNOW WHEN YOU'RE WELL OFF!
THUD!
LOOKS LIKE I GET TO EARN MY MONEY, AFTER ALL!
BYE-BYE, MR. NEWMAN-- THIS IS WHERE YOU GET OFF!
BLAM
THE WIND TORE AT HIS CLOTHING FURIOUSLY AND HIS FINGER TIGHTENED ON THE TRIGGER--
--JUST AS MY FINGER PRESSED A BUTTON ON MY WATCH--
--A BUTTON THAT ACTIVATED THE LITTLE SAFETY PRECAUTION I HAD SET UP WHEN I FIRST GOT ON THE TRAIN...
BLAM
WITH THE EMERGENCY BRAKE "PULLED," THE ROARING EXPRESS STOPPED SHORT...
BUT MY WOULD-BE ASSASSIN, DID NOT!
AAAAAIIIIEEEEEEE
SKREEEEE!



THE HUMAN TARGET

I SENSED THE LEOPARD BEFORE I ACTUALLY SAW IT -- PERCHED EAGERLY ON THE BRANCH, JADE EYES SHINING FROM THE DARKNESS...
REFLEX POINTED THE RIFLE IN MY HANDS AT A SPOT BETWEEN THOSE GLEAMING EYES--
AND PULLED THE TRIGGER, ONCE... TWICE...
KLIK KLIK
NOTHING HAPPENED!
FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, KING-- SHOOT!
THAT BEAST IS VICIOUS!
CHRISTOPHER CHANCE
THE HUMAN TARGET
"The KING of the JUNGLE CONTRACT!"
A Len Wein • Dick Giordano • Julie Schwartz ACTION-PLUS EXTRAVAGANZA!
I CAN'T SHOOT--!
SOMEONE HAS TAMPERED WITH MY GUN!
MY EYES NEVER LEFT THE BIG CAT AS I STRUGGLED TO CLEAR THE GUN-- BUT THE LEOPARD BECAME IMPATIENT...
DO SOMETHING, KING-- DO SOMETHING!
--SO I DID!
GRRRRRRGGHH

I WAS BACK ON MY FEET BEFORE THE SNARLING FELINE REGAINED ITS SENSES --AND THE UNEVEN STAND-OFF BEGAN ANEW...
THE CAT'S TENSING-- GETTING READY TO STRIKE AGAIN--
--AND MY LITTLE STUNT WON'T WORK TWICE!
BETTER COME UP WITH SOMETHING ELSE...
AND FAST!
TWIN EMERALD ORBS GLITTERED IN THE SHADOWS--AS I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF SOMETHING FROM THE CORNER OF MY EYE...
K-KING--? W-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
THAT CAMERA COST A SMALL FORTUNE!
DON'T ANNOY ME, MISTER LAVENDER --IF YOU WANT TO LIVE TO SPEND ANOTHER ONE!
I WAITED, STUDYING MY FOUR-FOOTED FOE CAREFULLY, WATCHING FOR THE CURL OF THE LIP, THE TELL-TALE TREMOR IN THE HAUNCHES...
NOW! THE LEOPARD LEAPED...
...AND A MINIATURE SUN EXPLODED IN ITS FACE!
IT WAS SIMPLE TO AVOID THE MAD, BLIND LUNGE-- AND DO WHAT HAD TO BE DONE...
KKRACKK!
THIS IS A TERRIBLE WAY TO TREAT A NORMALLY FINE RIFLE--
--BUT RIGHT NOW, IT'S NOT GOOD FOR MUCH ELSE!
THE BIG CAT'S ANGRY GROWL DIED IN MID-LEAP...
...AND SO DID THE CAT ITSELF...
2

AND WHEN I CHECKED THE COOLING CARCASS...
COLLAR MARKS ON THE NECK--! THEN THIS WASN'T JUST A FLUKE!
SOMEBODY TRAINED THIS OVERGROWN TABBY CAT--THEN SET IT LOOSE ON ME!
AND THAT SOMEBODY ISN'T FINISHED YET! I CAN "FEEL" HIM OUT THERE--WATCHING ME--TRACKING ME LIKE I WAS JUST ANOTHER ANIMAL!
BUT THEN--THAT'S THE NAME OF THE GAME! THAT'S WHAT I'M GETTING PAID TO BE!
I'D BEEN DINING DOWNSTAIRS AT LUIGI'S WHEN IT BEGAN--
YOU'LL LIKE THIS, SIGNOR CHRIS --TRUST ME! SHE GOT SOME VEAL... A COUPLE PEPPERS... A TOUCH OLIVE OIL...
MMMM --SMELLS FINE!
MIND IF I JOIN IN?
THE NAME'S GUNTHER KING--YOU'VE HEARD OF ME...
HAVE I A CHOICE, MR.--ER--KING?
HEY, THAT REALLY DOES LOOK GOOD! YOU'RE SURE YOU DON'T MIND IF I DIG IN?
LUIGI GLARED AT THE INTRUDER--AND I THOUGHT I COULD SEE SMOKE CURLING FROM HIS NOSTRILS AS HE WADDLED ANGRILY AWAY...
I THINK I GO AND SET FIRE TO SOMETHING IN THE KITCHEN, SIGNOR CHRIS!
THAT'S ONE DOWN! CARE TO TRY FOR TWO, KING--
--OR DO YOU HAVE A REASON FOR DISTURBING MY MEAL?
OH, THAT!
NOTHING, REALLY...
JUST A LITTLE MATTER OF--MURDER!
3

CONTINUE, KING -- IT'S YOUR STORY!
OKAY, CHANCE -- BASIC INFORMATION FIRST!
FACT ONE: I'M A HUNTER -- THE BEST HUNTER ... GUIDE ... BRING-'EM-BACK-ALIVE BOY IN ALL AFRICA!
FACT TWO: SOMEBODY RESENTS FACT ONE!
HIS NAME IS ERNEST HOLAWAY -- AND HE WAS "BIG BWANA" UNTIL I CUT IN!
HOLAWAY'S A LOUSY LOSER! HE FIGURES TO MAKE THE TOP AGAIN BY CLIMBING OVER MY CORPSE!
BUT WHY CONTACT ME, KING? YOU'RE THE GREAT WHITE HUNTER!
HUNTER, YES -- BUT I'M A BUSH-LEAGUE AMATEUR WHEN IT COMES TO BEING HUNTED!
YOU ARE THE EXPERT IN THAT DEPARTMENT, MISTER CHRISTOPHER CHANCE!
IN ONE WEEK, I'M SCHEDULED TO LEAD A PARTY OF SHUTTERBUGS INTO THE BUSH COUNTRY ON A PHOTO SAFARI --
-- AND I'M CERTAIN HOLAWAY IS PLANNING A SPECIAL "ACCIDENT" FOR ME!
MY ONLY HOPE OF SURVIVING THAT TREK IS... TO SEND YOU IN MY PLACE!
I LET KING FINISH MY DINNER BEFORE I REPLIED...
ALL RIGHT, KING -- I'LL TAKE THE CONTRACT! IT WILL COST YOU TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS -- IN ADVANCE...
... PLUS THE PRICE OF THAT MEAL!
4

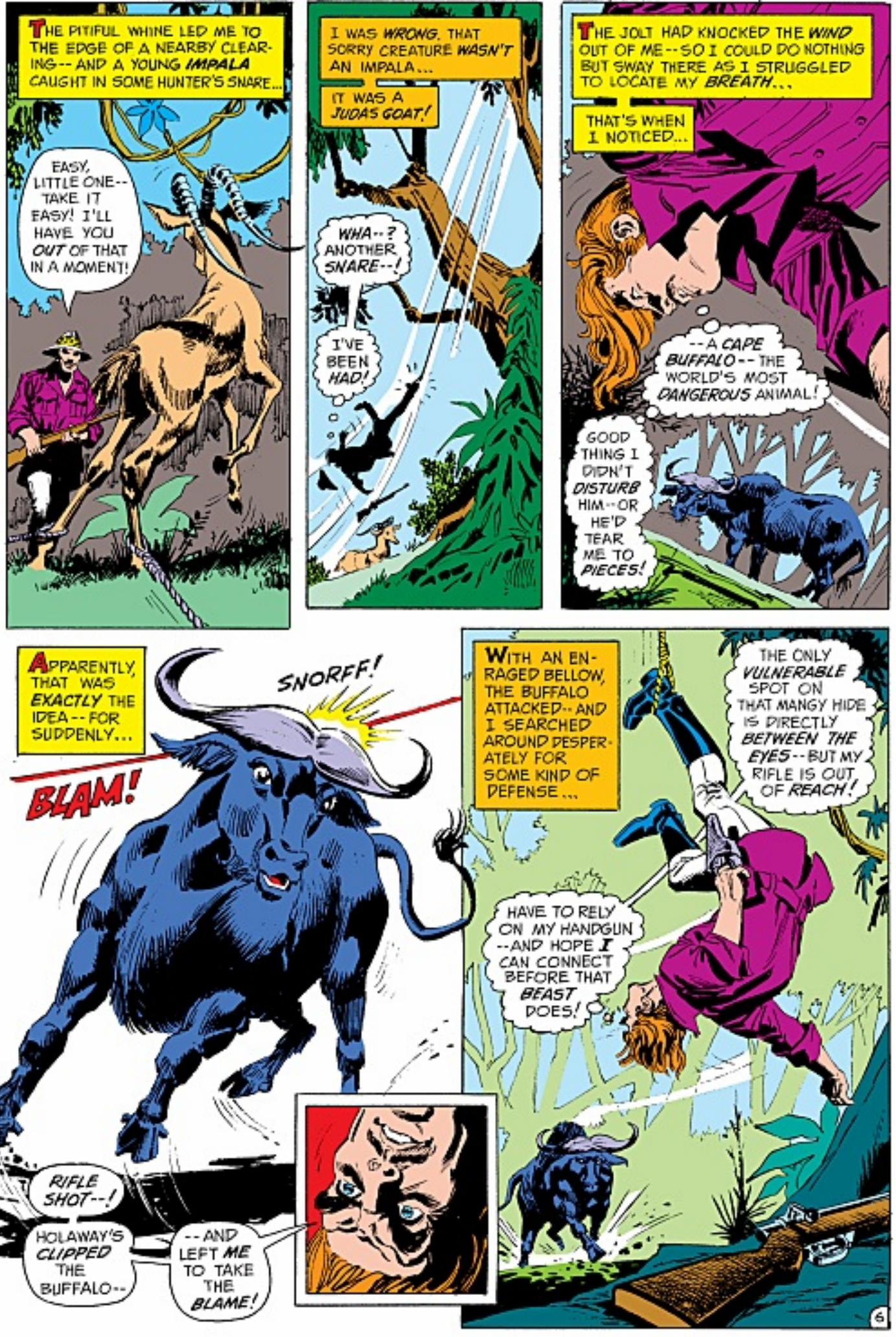
I DIDN'T LIKE BECOMING GUNTHER KING. THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT THE MAN -- A NAUSEATING ODOR -- THAT SEEMED TO RUB OFF ON EVERYTHING HE TOUCHED...
FORTUNATELY, I DIDN'T HAVE TO DUPLICATE THAT ODOR...
FORTY-EIGHT HOURS LATER, I WAS ON A PLANE TO KENYA...

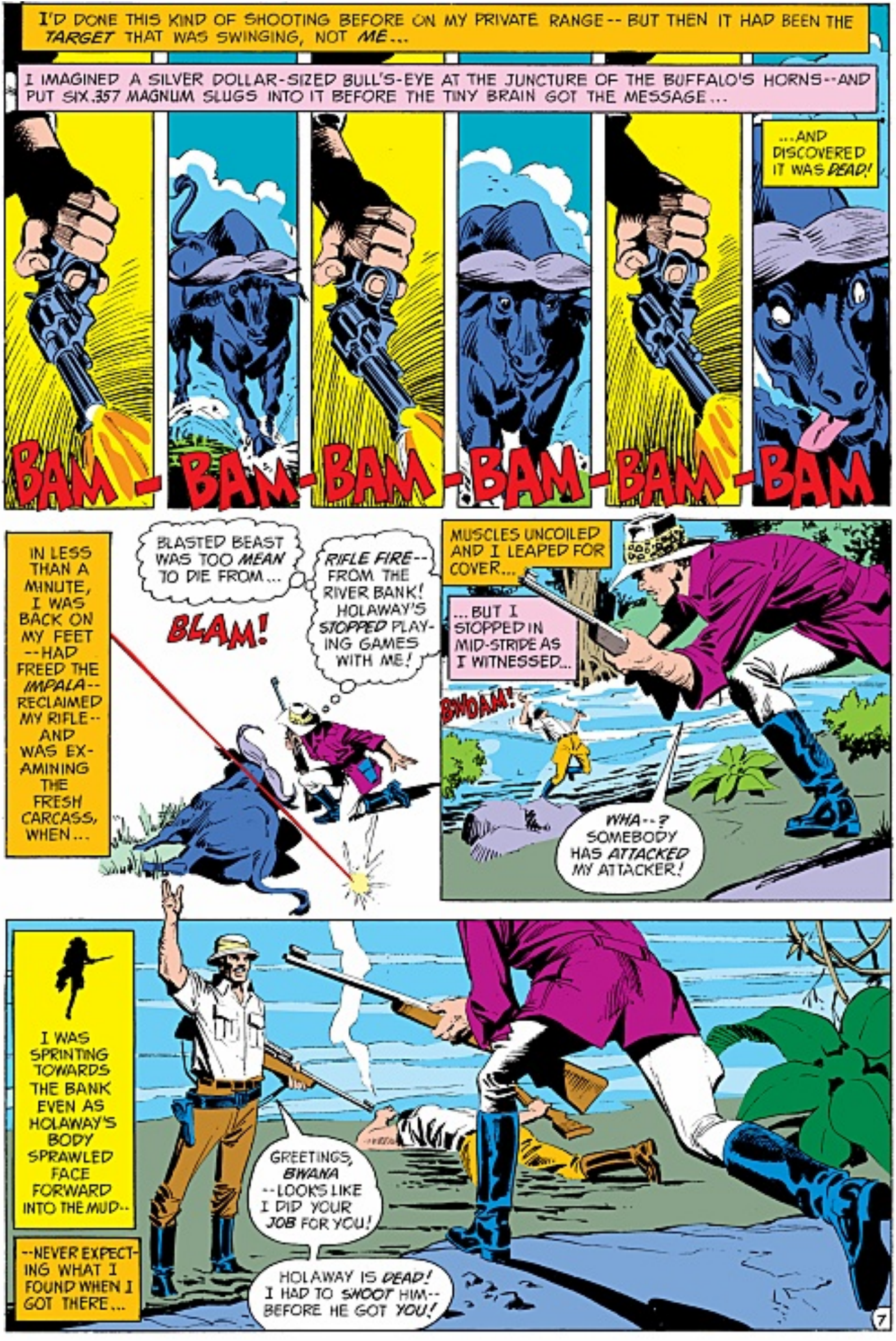
WE ROSE WITH THE SUN THE NEXT MORNING -- FOLLOWED IT ACROSS THE VELDT IN SEARCH OF CAMERA FODDER--
--BUT THE LAND WAS FAR HARDIER THAN MY DILETTANTE CLIENTS...
MMMOTHER, DARLING -- ALL THIS B-B-BUMPING IS SIMPLY RUINING MY HAIR!
SPEAK TO YOUR FATHER, DEAR -- MAYBE HE CAN HAVE THE WHOLE JUNGLE PAVED!

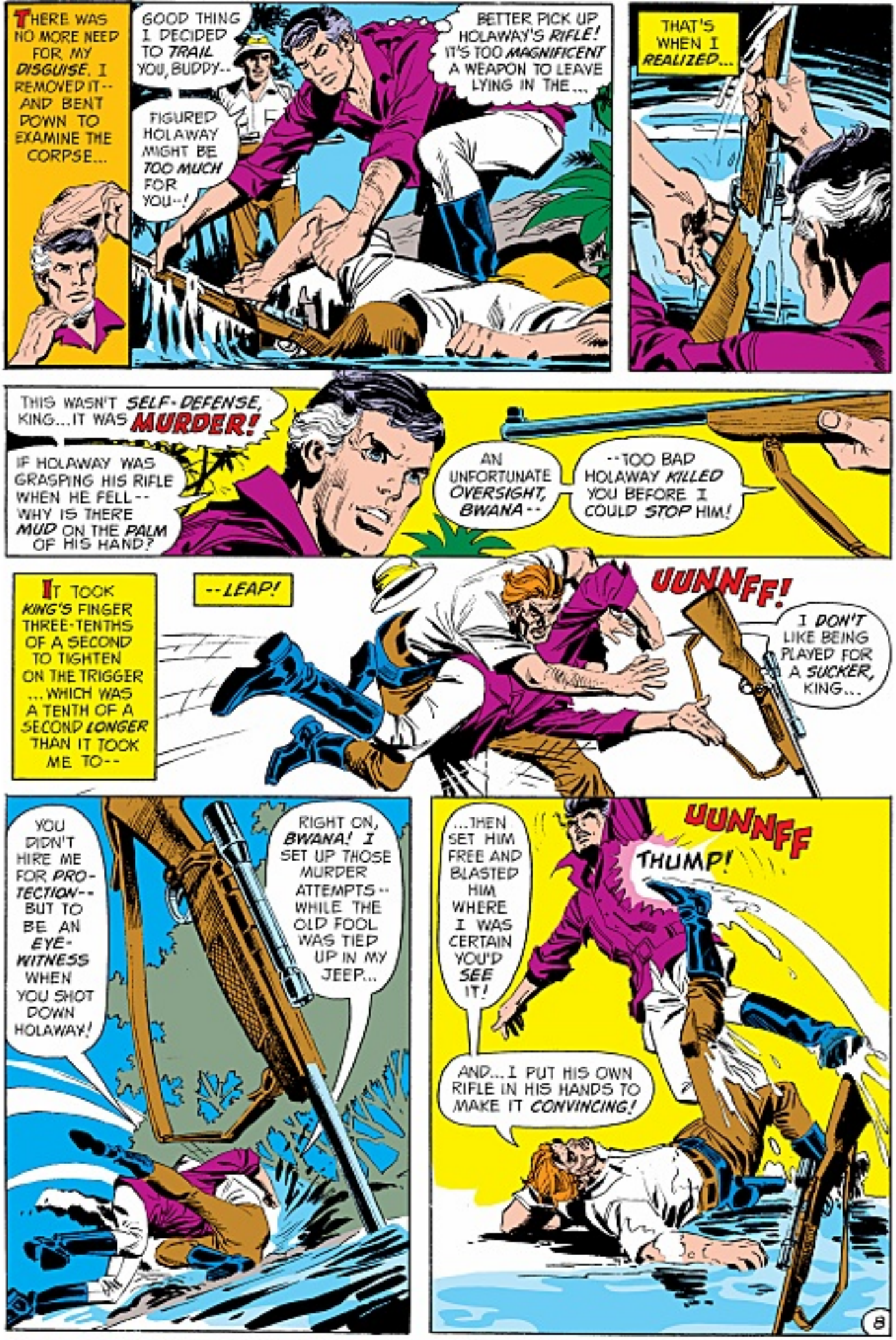
AND LATER...
QUICKLY, LUCIEN -- WHILE THAT WEAVER BIRD IS STILL IN MY SIGHTS -- SHOOT!
I'M TRYING, MY LOVE -- BUT THE CAMERA REFUSES TO COOPERATE!
IT WAS A DEPRESSINGLY LONG DAY...

AND WHEREVER WE TRAVELED, I COULD HEAR THE FAINT ECHO OF ANOTHER ENGINE ROLLING BACK FROM THE DISTANCE...
...WE WERE NOT ALONE!
HOLAWAY'S OUT THERE -- PLAYING HIS CAT-AND-MOUSE GAMES! WELL, LET HIM!
THIS MOUSE HAS FANGS OF HIS OWN!

WE SET UP CAMP ABOUT 4:30 AND SETTLED IN FOR THE NIGHT -- BUT IT WOULDN'T BE A QUIET NIGHT...
...FOR, JUST AN HOUR BEFORE DUSK...
WHHIIIIIIIIII
DID YOU HEAR THAT?
WHY -- IT SOUNDED LIKE SOME POOR ANIMAL IN DISTRESS!
KEEP CALM -- WHILE I CHECK IT OUT!
5


THE PITIFUL WHINE LED ME TO THE EDGE OF A NEARBY CLEARING-- AND A YOUNG IMPALA CAUGHT IN SOME HUNTER'S SNARE...
EASY, LITTLE ONE-- TAKE IT EASY! I'LL HAVE YOU OUT OF THAT IN A MOMENT!
I WAS WRONG. THAT SORRY CREATURE WASN'T AN IMPALA...
IT WAS A JUDAS GOAT!
WHA--? ANOTHER SNARE--!
I'VE BEEN HAD!
THE JOLT HAD KNOCKED THE WIND OUT OF ME--SO I COULD DO NOTHING BUT SWAY THERE AS I STRUGGLED TO LOCATE MY BREATH...
THAT'S WHEN I NOTICED...
--A CAPE BUFFALO-- THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS ANIMAL!
GOOD THING I DIDN'T DISTURB HIM--OR HE'D TEAR ME TO PIECES!
APPARENTLY, THAT WAS EXACTLY THE IDEA-- FOR SUDDENLY...
SNORFF!
BLAM!
WITH AN ENRAGED BELLOW, THE BUFFALO ATTACKED-- AND I SEARCHED AROUND DESPERATELY FOR SOME KIND OF DEFENSE...
THE ONLY VULNERABLE SPOT ON THAT MANGY HIDE IS DIRECTLY BETWEEN THE EYES-- BUT MY RIFLE IS OUT OF REACH!
HAVE TO RELY ON MY HANDGUN --AND HOPE I CAN CONNECT BEFORE THAT BEAST DOES!
RIFLE SHOT--!
HOLAWAY'S CLIPPED THE BUFFALO--
--AND LEFT ME TO TAKE THE BLAME!
6


I'D DONE THIS KIND OF SHOOTING BEFORE ON MY PRIVATE RANGE -- BUT THEN IT HAD BEEN THE TARGET THAT WAS SWINGING, NOT ME...
I IMAGINED A SILVER DOLLAR-SIZED BULL'S-EYE AT THE JUNCTURE OF THE BUFFALO'S HORNS--AND PUT SIX .357 MAGNUM SLUGS INTO IT BEFORE THE TINY BRAIN GOT THE MESSAGE...
...AND DISCOVERED IT WAS DEAD!
BAM - BAM - BAM - BAM - BAM - BAM
IN LESS THAN A MINUTE, I WAS BACK ON MY FEET --HAD FREED THE IMPALA-- RECLAIMED MY RIFLE-- AND WAS EXAMINING THE FRESH CARCASS, WHEN...
BLASTED BEAST WAS TOO MEAN TO DIE FROM...
BLAM!
RIFLE FIRE-- FROM THE RIVER BANK! HOLAWAY'S STOPPED PLAYING GAMES WITH ME!
MUSCLES UNCOILED AND I LEAPED FOR COVER...
...BUT I STOPPED IN MID-STRIDE AS I WITNESSED...
BWOAM!
WHA--? SOMEBODY HAS ATTACKED MY ATTACKER!
I WAS SPRINTING TOWARDS THE BANK EVEN AS HOLAWAY'S BODY SPRAWLED FACE FORWARD INTO THE MUD--
--NEVER EXPECTING WHAT I FOUND WHEN I GOT THERE...
GREETINGS, BWANA --LOOKS LIKE I DID YOUR JOB FOR YOU!
HOLAWAY IS DEAD! I HAD TO SHOOT HIM-- BEFORE HE GOT YOU!
7


THERE WAS NO MORE NEED FOR MY DISGUISE. I REMOVED IT -- AND BENT DOWN TO EXAMINE THE CORPSE...
GOOD THING I DECIDED TO TRAIL YOU, BUDDY--
FIGURED HOLAWAY MIGHT BE TOO MUCH FOR YOU--!
BETTER PICK UP HOLAWAY'S RIFLE! IT'S TOO MAGNIFICENT A WEAPON TO LEAVE LYING IN THE...
THAT'S WHEN I REALIZED...
THIS WASN'T SELF-DEFENSE, KING...IT WAS MURDER!
IF HOLAWAY WAS GRASPING HIS RIFLE WHEN HE FELL -- WHY IS THERE MUD ON THE PALM OF HIS HAND?
AN UNFORTUNATE OVERSIGHT, BWANA --
--TOO BAD HOLAWAY KILLED YOU BEFORE I COULD STOP HIM!
IT TOOK KING'S FINGER THREE-TENTHS OF A SECOND TO TIGHTEN ON THE TRIGGER ...WHICH WAS A TENTH OF A SECOND LONGER THAN IT TOOK ME TO--
--LEAP!
UUNNFF!
I DON'T LIKE BEING PLAYED FOR A SUCKER, KING...
YOU DIDN'T HIRE ME FOR PROTECTION -- BUT TO BE AN EYE-WITNESS WHEN YOU SHOT DOWN HOLAWAY!
RIGHT ON, BWANA! I SET UP THOSE MURDER ATTEMPTS -- WHILE THE OLD FOOL WAS TIED UP IN MY JEEP...
...THEN SET HIM FREE AND BLASTED HIM WHERE I WAS CERTAIN YOU'D SEE IT!
UUNNFF
THUMP!
AND...I PUT HIS OWN RIFLE IN HIS HANDS TO MAKE IT CONVINCING!
8

THE HUMAN TARGET

A GOOD CAR IS LIKE A GOOD TIMEPIECE -- EVERY GEAR MESHES IN PERFECT PRECISION...

I'D BEEN BACK IN BOSTON FOR A FEW DAYS BEFORE I HAD TIME TO PUT MY '37 CORD THROUGH HER PACES -- AND ENJOY THE FEEL OF THAT LOVELY MACHINE...

PURE POETRY IN MOTION! MAKES ONE WONDER WHY THEY EVER BOTHERED PRODUCING ANYTHING ELSE!

"PROGRESS" --I SUPPOSE!

AND SO IT WENT: MY EARS HEARING ONLY THE HUM OF THE CORD'S POWERFUL ENGINE -- MY EYES FOCUSED ONLY ON THE COBBLED ROAD AHEAD -- TOTALLY OBLIVIOUS TO EVERYTHING ELSE...

...INCLUDING THE MAN WHO WAS ABOUT TO KILL ME--

CHRISTOPHER CHANCE...

The HUMAN TARGET

"The SHADOWS-OF-YESTERDAY CONTRACT"

LEN WEIN: WRITER
DICK GIORDANO: ARTIST
JULIUS SCHWARTZ: EDITOR

BLAM!

THE SOUND OF THE SHOT WAS MIXED WITH THE CHINKLE OF SPLINTERED GLASS--

--AND I PULLED THE WHEEL HARD TO THE RIGHT EVEN AS THE FRAGMENTS OF THE WINDSHIELD STARTED FALLING...

SOMEBODY ZEROING IN ON ME--!

I HIT THE CURB HARD-- BUT MY ATTENTION WAS ALREADY ELSEWHERE-- SCANNING THE AREA FOR A CLUE TO THE SNIPER'S LOCATION--

--AND FINDING IT!

SOMETHING GLEAMING ON THAT ROOFTOP ACROSS THE WAY--

--A RIFLE!

NOBODY WAS PAYING ME--SO I HAD NO INTENTION OF MAKING MYSELF A TARGET...
CAN'T SEE ANYTHING BUT THE RIFLE BARREL! NOT MUCH TO SHOOT AT--!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BUT, AS USUAL, I HIT WHAT I AIMED FOR...
CLAKT
I BURST INTO THE BUILDING AND CHARGED UP THE STAIRS-- MY SENSES "TUNED IN" TO ANY POSSIBLE HINT OF DANGER-- BUT WHEN I REACHED THE ROOFTOP...
GONE! FRIEND SNIPER HAS TAKEN IT ON THE PROVERBIAL LAM!
THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT TO DO BUT HEAD BACK TO MY WOUNDED CORD...
QUITE A WEAPON! I'M SURPRISED THE MAN MISSED WHAT HE SHOT AT!
JUUHHNNN
THEN AGAIN--
MAYBE HE DIDN'T!
2

WITHOUT ANOTHER THOUGHT, I HELPED THE BLEEDING FIGURE SIT ERECT...
EASY, FELLA--
JUST HANG ON FOR A MINUTE--
--AND I'LL GET YOU TO A HOSPITAL!
NO--PLEASE--NOT A HOSPITAL--!
I STARED INTO THE MAN'S SHABBY FACE--AND FOUND MORE THERE THAN THE RAVAGES OF ALCOHOL AND TIME--
IN HIS EYES, I FOUND DESPERATION AND FEAR...
T-TAKE ME TO YOUR PLACE INSTEAD--
H-HAVE A JOB TO OFFER YOU... MISTER CHRISTOPHER CHANCE!
MY PLACE IS ON BEACON HILL, THE TOP TWO FLOORS OVER LUIGI'S RESTAURANT ON JOY STREET...
HE'S A LUCKY FELLA, SIGNOR CHRIS! THE BULLET--SHE CAME CLEAR OUT THE OTHER SIDE!
THIS SHOULD FIX 'IM UP FOR A LITTLE WHILE!
GRAZIE, LUIGI--I APPRECIATE IT!
AND WHEN LUIGI HAD GONE...
START TALKING, FRIEND! YOUR HIDING IN MY CAR HAS ALREADY COST ME A WINDSHIELD!
PLEASE, MISTER CHANCE--I'M NOT WHAT I APPEAR TO BE!
THIS IS ONLY A DISGUISE--TO HIDE ME FROM MY PURSUERS!
JUDGING FROM YOUR CONDITION--IT HASN'T BEEN TOO SUCCESSFUL, MISTER--? MISTER--?
--WALSH! HYRAM WALSH! TILL RECENTLY, AN ACCOUNTANT FOR TALL TOWERS, INCORPORATED--AND THAT'S THE CAUSE OF MY TROUBLE!
YOU SEE, THE CORPORATION IS A "FRONT" FOR THE SYNDICATE!
I LEARNED THIS QUITE BY ACCIDENT--AND STOLE SOME INCRIMINATING DOCUMENTS, PLANNING TO TURN THEM OVER TO THE POLICE--BUT THE MOB FOUND OUT BEFORE I HAD TIME!
THEY'VE HIRED SOMEONE TO KILL ME--AND HE'LL KEEP TRYING TILL HE SUCCEEDS!
3

HAVE YOU ANY IDEA WHAT YOUR ASSASSIN LOOKS LIKE?
YES-- I SAW HIM ONCE, FOLLOWING ME! GOT A GOOD LOOK AT HIM!
HE'S TALL, DARK-HAIRED, HAS A HEARING AID IN ONE EAR -- AND A BROKEN HEART TATTOOED ON HIS RIGHT CHEEK!

AN IMAGE FORMED IN MY HEAD AS WALSH RAMBLED ON -- AN IMAGE OF TOMB-COLD EYES AND A SADISTIC GRIN! I KNEW THE MAN WALSH SPOKE OF --
-- I'D MET HIM TWENTY YEARS BEFORE -- ON THE VERY DAY MY FATHER DIED...

THEY STARTED SPILLING OUT NOW -- ALL THE MEMORIES I'D KEPT BURIED FOR SO LONG! I SAW MY FATHER'S FACE FLOATING BEFORE ME --
-- AND I WAS A KID ONCE MORE...
I'M SORRY, CHRIS -- BUT I JUST CAN'T AFFORD A NEW PAIR OF ICE-SKATES RIGHT NOW...
SURE, DAD -- I UNDERSTAND! DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!

BUT HE DID WORRY! ALL HIS LIFE HE WANTED BETTER THAN HE HAD -- AND COULD NEVER ATTAIN IT! EVEN HIS JOB IN THE INCOME TAX BUREAU, HANDLING OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY...
IT WAS NO WONDER HE FINALLY DID WHAT HE DID...
EASY LOAN
IT'S JUST A SMALL LOAN, SHARKEY -- TO INVEST IN THE STOCK MARKET! SOON AS I MAKE A KILLING, YOU'LL GET BACK DOUBLE!

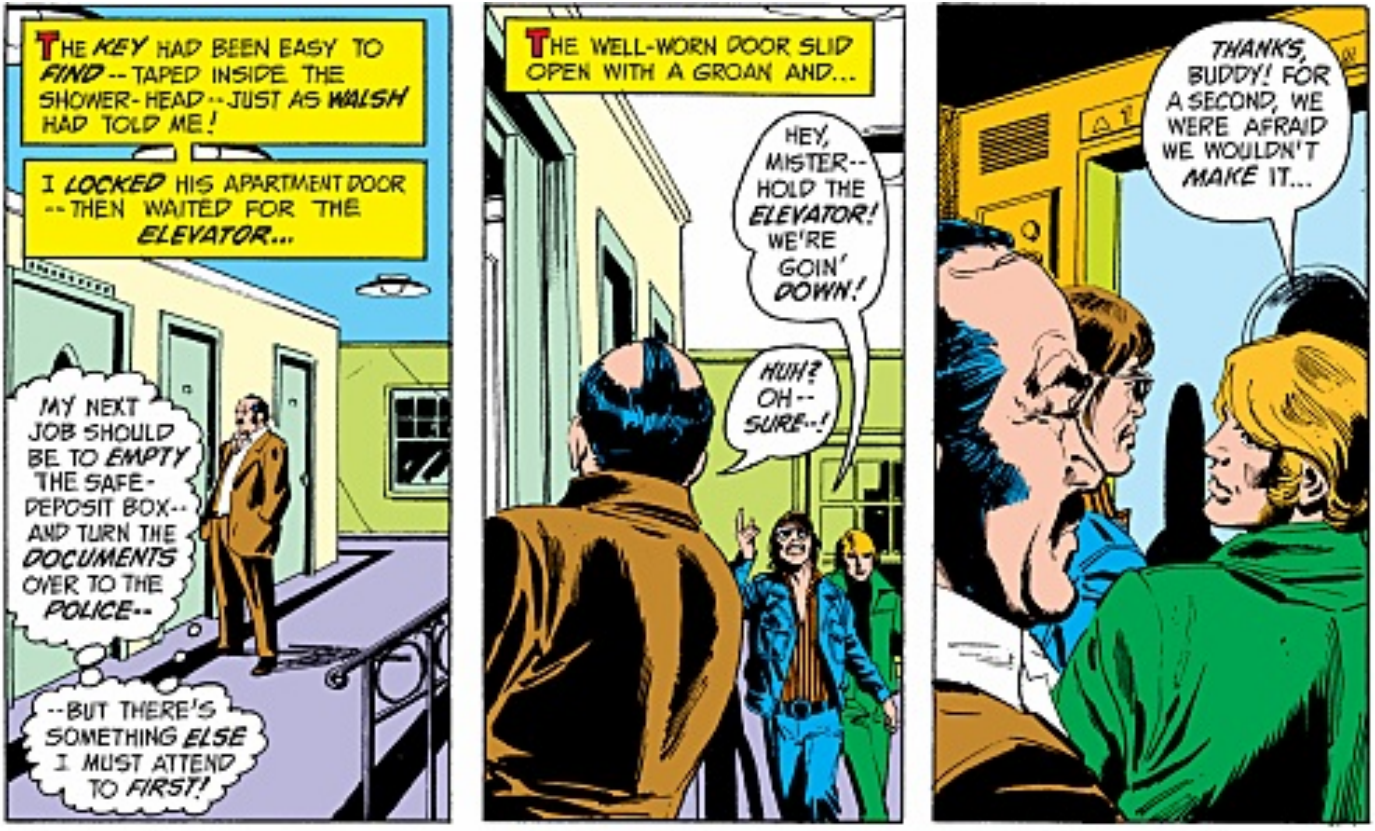
BUT THE MARKET KILLED MY FATHER -- FIGURATIVELY, THAT IS. THE REAL KILLING WOULD COME LATER --
--AFTER A CONVERSATION AT OUR FRONT DOOR...
I HAVEN'T GOT THE MONEY! I LOST IT ALL! WHAT DO YOU EXPECT ME TO PAY WITH?
WE'LL THINK OF SOMETHING! EITHER WE GET WHAT'S COMING TO US --
-- OR YOU GET WHAT'S COMING TO YOU!
4

AND THAT WAS THE LAST WE HEARD OF SHARKEY AND COMPANY UNTIL SEVERAL WEEKS LATER...
--AS MY FATHER AND I RETURNED FROM MY HIGH SCHOOL GYM...
WHAT A BASKETBALL GAME! OLIVER HELD ON TO THAT BALL UNTIL...
NO PARKING AT ANYTIME
EVENIN', MISTER CHANCE! LIKE TO HAVE A WORD WITH YOU AND YOUR BOY IN THIS ALLEY--
--OR DO YOU WANT TO GET IT RIGHT HERE?
VH-WHAT IS THIS? WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH US?
ME? OL' DANCER DON'T WANT NOTHIN'! BUT MISTER SHARKEY-- HE IS ANOTHER CASE!
YOU STIFFED HIM, MISTER CHANCE-- AND HE WANTS TO MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF YOU--
--SO NOBODY ELSE GETS FUNNY IDEAS!
WHO CAN SAY WHAT FEAR WILL DO TO A MAN? SOME WILL USE IT AS A TOOL TO TRIUMPH-- OTHERS...
WELL, MY FATHER WAS ONE OF THE OTHERS...
DANCER-- PLEASE-- DON'T--! I'LL GET THE MONEY-- I SWEAR IT! PLEASE-- DON'T KILL ME!
MY OWN FEAR HELD ME ROOTED TO THE SPOT, UNABLE TO MOVE -- AS I WATCHED MY FATHER DEGRADE HIMSELF BEFORE THE MANIACAL DANCER...
PLEASE-- DANCER-- ;SOB;--I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU ASK--ANYTHING-- ;SOB; BUT DON'T KILL ME--!
HA HA HA! BELIEVE ME, CHANCE-- I'M DOIN' YOU A FAVOR!
MY EYES WENT WIDE AS DANCER THUMBED BACK THE HAMMER-- AND SUDDENLY, MY OWN TERROR SEEMED QUITE POINTLESS...
IT TOOK LESS THAN AN INSTANT TO-- ACT!
NO!
LEAVE HIM ALONE! IF YOU WANT TO KILL SOMEONE--
--SHOOT ME!
5

HA HA--OFFER'S TEMPTIN', KID--
--BUT I'M NOT GETTIN' PAID TO ERASE YOU...
THWOK
THEY'RE ONLY PAYING ME FOR-- HIM!
HA HA HA HA
BLAM
NO!
SOMETHING SNAPPED INSIDE MY HEAD AT THE SOUND OF THAT SHOT! ALL THE FEAR AND PANIC WAS GONE--
--REPLACED BY A SNARLING, SEETHING RAGE...
YOU ANIMAL-- I'LL KILL YOU WITH MY BARE HANDS--!
WHAT IN--!
YOU CRAZY KID! I'M GONNA BLOW YOU ALL TO HELL--!
ANIMAL... ANIMAL...
BLAM BLAM!
FURY LENT ME STRENGTH AS MY FINGERS TIGHTENED AROUND DANCER'S THROAT-- AND, FOR THE FIRST TIME, I COULD SEE FEAR MIRRORED IN THE KILLER'S EYES AS WELL...
THIS IS FOR MY FATHER... MY FATHER...
GAK-AK! YOU'RE-- CHOKIN' ME--!
6

DYING MEN CLUTCH AT STRAWS, IT'S SAID, BUT DANCER FOUND MORE THAN THAT...
--IN THE FORM OF A HEAVY WOODEN MILK-BOX...
I'M GONNA BLAST YOUR--
WWHEEEOOOOWWHEEOO
HUH? COPS MUST'A HEARD THE GUNSHOTS! GOTTA GET OUTA HERE--!
DANCER WAS RUNNING HARD AND FAST AS I PULLED MYSELF ERECT-- BUT BEFORE I COULD HOPE TO FOLLOW...
CAN'T LET HIM GET AWAY--
DAD-- STILL ALIVE--!
UUHHHHH...
AS I STUMBLED TO HIS SIDE, MY FATHER'S BREATHING WAS SHALLOW--
BUT HE STILL HAD BREATH ENOUGH TO SPEAK...
HANG ON, DAD! HELP IS COMING--!
NO-- TOO LATE-- JUST LISTEN TO ME, CHRIS--
I WANT YOU TO PROMISE-- YOU'LL MAKE SOMETHING OF YOURSELF-- BE SUCCESSFUL--
--SO YOU DON'T END UP-- LIKE ME...
MY FATHER NEVER HEARD MY PROMISE...
I SWEAR, DAD-- THAT AS LONG AS I LIVE, NOBODY WILL EVER HAVE TO LIVE WITH THE KIND OF FEAR YOU KNEW-- OR FACE THAT HUMILIATION!
I TRIED TO BE A TARGET FOR YOU, DAD -- AND FAILED! I'LL SWEAR I'LL NEVER FAIL AGAIN!
SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED TO ME THAT NIGHT IN THE ALLEY-- SOMETHING HAD SNAPPED IN MY MIND-- FOR, IN THE WEEKS AND MONTHS TO COME, I DISCOVERED--
--I WAS INCAPABLE OF FEELING FEAR!
WITH THAT ASSET, I SET ABOUT TRAINING MYSELF FOR THE JOB THAT LAY AHEAD...
7

CHANCE--? MISTER CHANCE-- ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?
WHA--? OH-- WALSH! MY MIND WANDERED FOR A MOMENT!
GO ON WITH WHAT YOU WERE SAYING!
I'M DONE SAYING! ALL I WANT TO KNOW NOW IS-- WILL YOU PROTECT ME?
UNDECIDED, WALSH! IF YOU KNOW ME, YOU ALSO KNOW--I WORK FOR A FEE!
CAN YOU AFFORD ME?
IF IT'S MONEY YOU WANT, MISTER CHANCE -- I CAN ONLY GIVE YOU A QUARTER!
IT'S ALL I HAVE IN THE WORLD RIGHT NOW!
THAT'S A LITTLE BELOW MY MINIMUM, WALSH--
--BUT I'LL MAKE YOU A DEAL--
I'LL FLIP YOU FOR MY FEE--DOUBLE OR NOTHING!
WALSH WATCHED THE SPINNING COIN AS IF IT WERE HIS ENTIRE LIFE TWIRLING BEFORE HIS EYES--
--AND, PERHAPS, IT WAS!...
I CAUGHT THE FALLING COIN, SLAPPED IT AGAINST MY WRIST--
--AND RAISED MY HAND TO CHECK THE RESULTS...
HEADS, WALSH-- YOU WIN!
I'LL TAKE THE CONTRACT --FREE!
DON'T MISS NEXT ISSUE'S... "The DEADLY DANCER CONTRACT!"
NEXT ISSUE ON SALE ON OR ABOUT FEB. 27TH
8



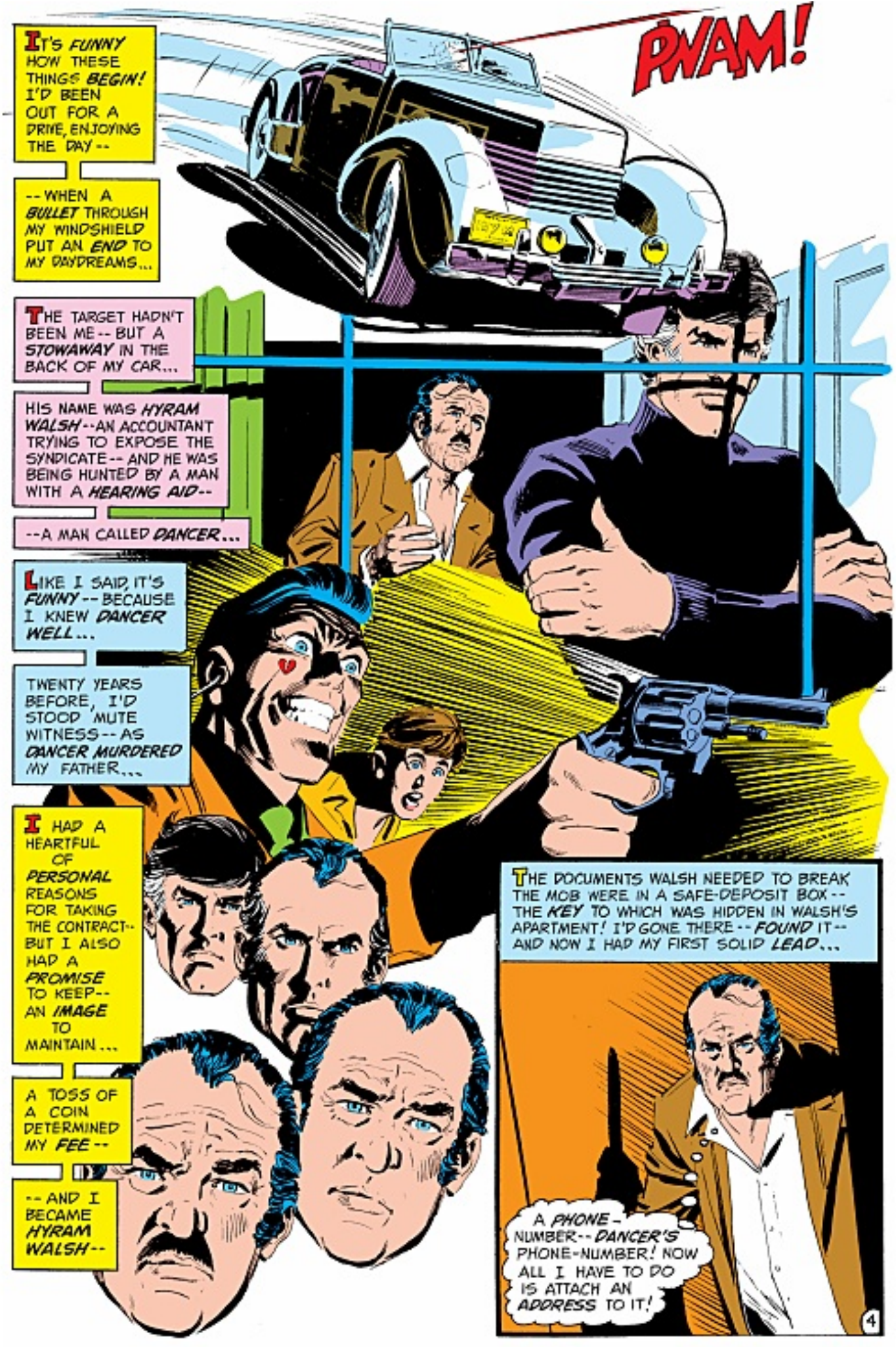
THE HUMAN TARGET

"The DEADLY DANCER CONTRACT!"

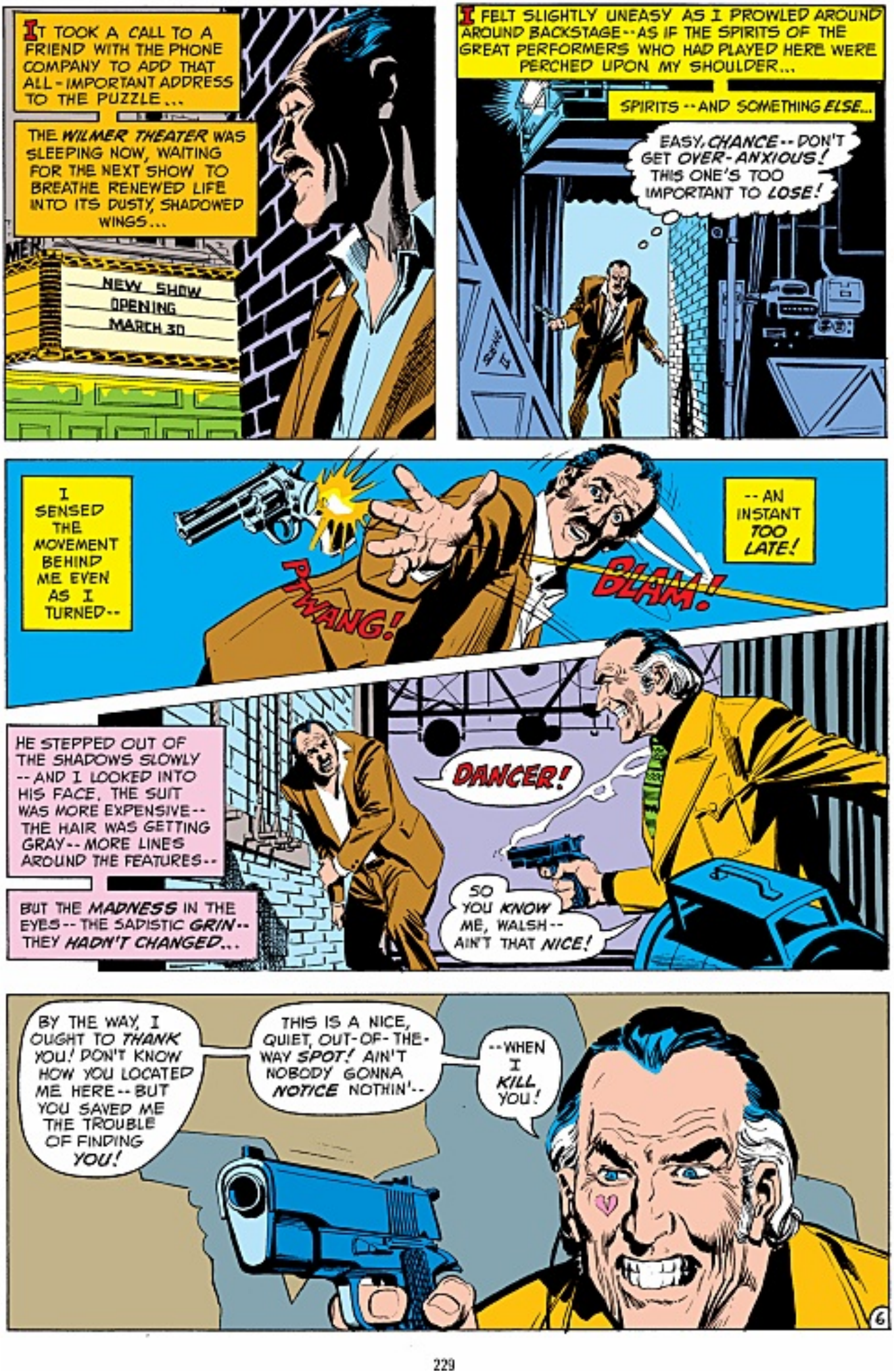
ACTION-PLUS
FROM:
LEN WEIN
writer
DICK GIORDANO
artist
JULIUS SCHWARTZ
editor

THOSE TWO YOUNG PUNKS HAD BEEN FOLLOWING ME FOR A WHILE--AND I KNEW IT--
--SO I WAS NOT REALLY SURPRISED WHEN WE REACHED THE LOBBY LEVEL AND...
HEY--THE ELEVATOR'S NOT STOPPING!
YOU GUESSED IT, POPS! WE'VE GOT US AN APPOINTMENT IN THE BASEMENT!
LOOK, FELLAS--IF THIS IS A MUGGING, YOU PICKED THE WRONG GUY! I'M FLAT BUSTED!
WE AIN'T AFTER YER BREAD, POPS--SO YA CAN QUIT YAPPIN'!
YEAH--JUST MOVE IT!
THIS BASEMENT WAS NO DIFFERENT FROM ANY OTHER--FILLED WITH THE USUAL PIPES, BOILERS, GARBAGE--AND RATS...
...INCLUDING A PAIR OF TWO-FOOTED ONES WHO SLAMMED ME AGAINST A COLD BRICK WALL...
OKAY, POPS--IT'S ANSWER-TIME! SOMEBODY WANTS YOU REAL BAD--A BUNDLE'S WORTH!
YEAH--WHADDAYA GOT THAT MAKES YA WORTH THAT KIND'A GREEN?
P-PLEASE--
DON'T HURT ME!
I--I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!
C'MON, POPS... QUIT WHIMPERIN'! EITHER YOU SPILL IT--OR I'M GONNA CARVE MY INITIALS ON YER FACE!
I'D BEEN PLAYING THE ROLE TO THE HILT--THE DOWN-AND-OUT LOSER, TOO FRIGHTENED TO BE ANY THREAT...
BUT WHEN THE PUNK'S KNIFE-BLADE FLASHED THROUGH THE AIR, THE TIME FOR PLAYING WAS THROUGH...
UUNNGG--MY WRIST--!
2

I'D FIGURED A THREE-SECOND REACTION TIME BEFORE THE GUN COULD BE BROUGHT INTO PLAY! I WAS A SPLIT-SECOND OFF...
BLAM
AARRGGHH!
THUNK
...BUT AT THAT POINT, IT REALLY DIDN'T MATTER ANYMORE...
ALL RIGHT, PUNK-- MY TURN! I'M NOT AS GOOD AT INITIALS AS YOUR PAL -- BUT I CAN GIVE YOU A PERMANENT GRIN FROM EAR TO EAR!
NOW, TALK!
PLEASE, MISTER-- I SWEAR-- WE DON'T KNOW NOTHIN'!
WORD WAS OUT ALL OVER THE STREET! SOME DUDE SAID HE'D PAY HEAVY TO THE GUY THAT SPOTTED YA--AND REPORTED YER LOCATION BACK TO HIM!
JEFF AND ME JUST GOT A LITTLE AMBITIOUS, IS ALL!
WHO WAS THIS "DUDE"? HOW WERE YOU SUPPOSED TO CONTACT HIM?
DON'T KNOW HIS NAME -- JUST SOME CRAZY GUY WITH A HEARIN' AID! HE GAVE US A--A NUMBER TO CALL IF WE FOUND YA!
N-NOW PLEASE-- PUT AWAY THE BLADE! IT'S STARTIN' TO MAKE MY NECK ITCH!
SURE -- AFTER YOU GIVE ME THE NUMBER!
I COMMITTED THE PHONE-NUMBER TO MEMORY-- AND PUT AWAY THE KNIFE AS I HAD PROMISED--
-- THEN INCREASED THE PRESSURE OF MY FOREARM AGAINST THE PUNK'S NECK -- UNTIL HE SLIPPED TO THE FLOOR IN A DEEP SLEEP...
I HAD A LONG OVERDUE MEETING TO ATTEND--AND I DIDN'T WANT ANYBODY SPOILING THE SURPRISE...
3

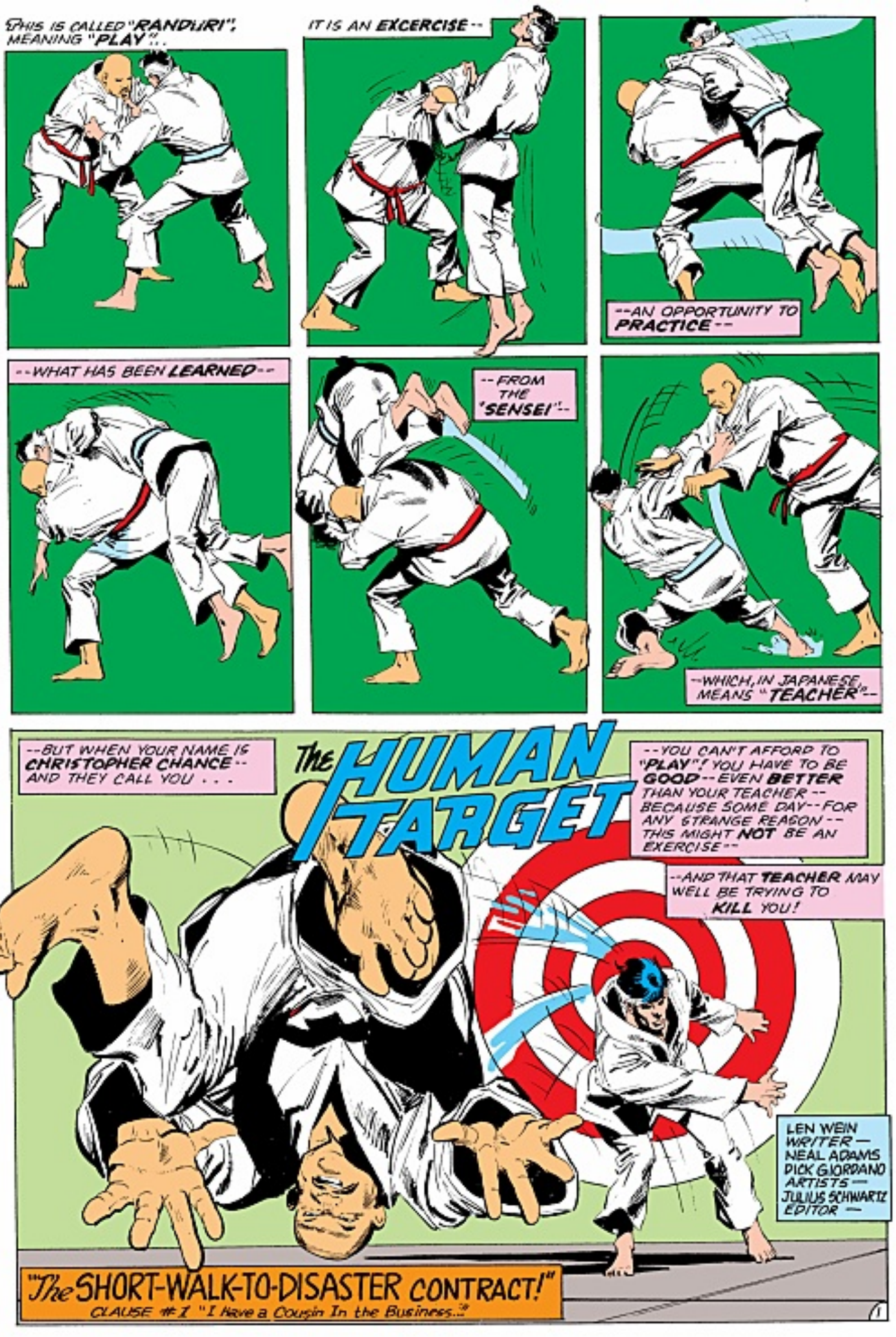

It's FUNNY how these things BEGIN! I'd been out for a drive, enjoying the day --
-- when a BULLET through my windshield put an END to my daydreams...
PYAM!
The target hadn't been me -- but a STOWAWAY in the back of my car...
His name was HYRAM WALSH -- an accountant trying to expose the syndicate -- and he was being hunted by a man with a HEARING AID --
-- a man called DANCER...
Like I said, it's FUNNY -- because I knew DANCER WELL...
Twenty years before, I'd stood mute witness -- as DANCER MURDERED my father...
I had a heartful of PERSONAL reasons for taking the contract -- but I also had a PROMISE to keep -- an IMAGE to maintain...
A toss of a coin determined my FEE --
-- and I became HYRAM WALSH --
The documents Walsh needed to break the mob were in a safe-deposit box -- the KEY to which was hidden in Walsh's apartment! I'd gone there -- FOUND it -- and now I had my first solid LEAD...
A PHONE-NUMBER -- DANCER'S PHONE-NUMBER! NOW ALL I HAVE TO DO IS ATTACH AN ADDRESS TO IT!
4

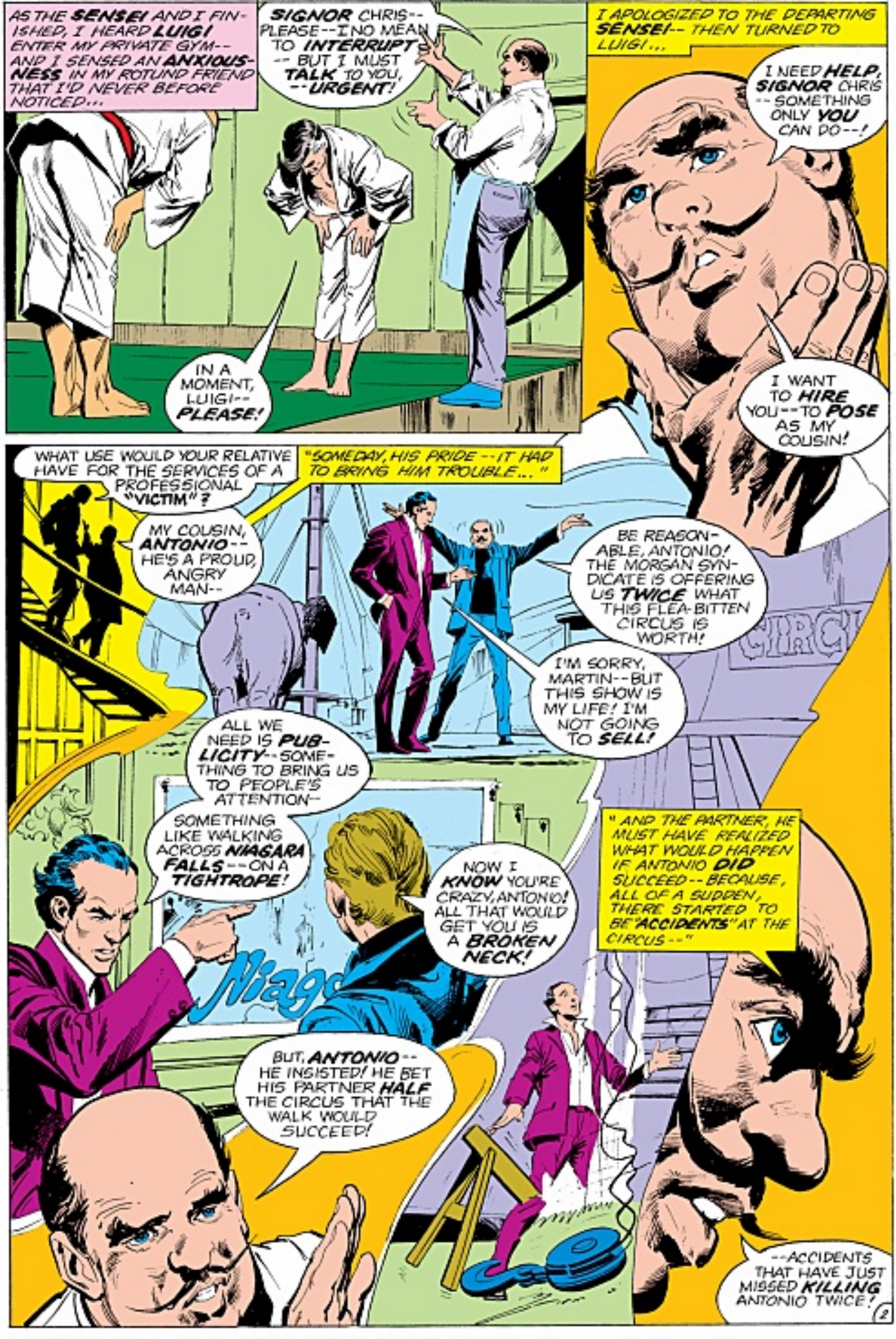
NEW HOPE FILLED ME AS I REACHED THE GRIMY ALLEYWAY--
...HOPE QUICKLY CAST ASIDE WHEN I SAW THE "RECEPTION COMMITTEE" AWAITING ME THERE...
THOSE TWO PUNKS DIDN'T COME ALONE! THEY LEFT A MAN TO COVER THE ALLEY--
--AND I DON'T THINK HE'S TOO HAPPY TO SEE ME WITHOUT HIS FRIENDS!
THE WHEELMAN WAS HIGH ON SOMETHING...THAT MUCH WAS OBVIOUS! I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF HIS GLAZED EYES -- AND KNEW WHAT HE PLANNED TO DO...
HE'LL PULP ME AGAINST THE BACK WALL--UNLESS I CAN GET OUT OF HIS WAY--!
--BUT THE DOOR LOCKED AUTOMATICALLY BEHIND ME--AND THERE'S NO OTHER AVENUE OF ESCAPE...UNLESS...
THE FIRE-ESCAPE WAS OLD, RUSTY. THE LADDER LATCH GAVE WAY UNDER MY WEIGHT AS I SWUNG OVER THE SPEEDING CAR --
KWA-RASSH-H!
-- AND GRAVITY DID THE REST!..
THE DRIVER WAS UNCONSCIOUS BEFORE THE CAR SLAMMED INTO THE ALLEY WALL-- BUT I DIDN'T WASTE TIME CHECKING THE DAMAGE...
I STILL HAD AN APPOINTMENT TO KEEP..
5


IT TOOK A CALL TO A FRIEND WITH THE PHONE COMPANY TO ADD THAT ALL-IMPORTANT ADDRESS TO THE PUZZLE...
THE WILMER THEATER WAS SLEEPING NOW, WAITING FOR THE NEXT SHOW TO BREATHE RENEWED LIFE INTO ITS DUSTY, SHADOWED WINGS...
NEW SHOW OPENING MARCH 30
I FELT SLIGHTLY UNEASY AS I PROWLED AROUND AROUND BACKSTAGE--AS IF THE SPIRITS OF THE GREAT PERFORMERS WHO HAD PLAYED HERE WERE PERCHED UPON MY SHOULDER...
SPIRITS--AND SOMETHING ELSE...
EASY, CHANCE--DON'T GET OVER-ANXIOUS! THIS ONE'S TOO IMPORTANT TO LOSE!
I SENSED THE MOVEMENT BEHIND ME EVEN AS I TURNED--
--AN INSTANT TOO LATE!
TWANG!
BLAM!
HE STEPPED OUT OF THE SHADOWS SLOWLY--AND I LOOKED INTO HIS FACE. THE SUIT WAS MORE EXPENSIVE--THE HAIR WAS GETTING GRAY--MORE LINES AROUND THE FEATURES--
BUT THE MADNESS IN THE EYES--THE SADISTIC GRIN--THEY HADN'T CHANGED...
DANCER!
SO YOU KNOW ME, WALSH--AIN'T THAT NICE!
BY THE WAY, I OUGHT TO THANK YOU! DON'T KNOW HOW YOU LOCATED ME HERE--BUT YOU SAVED ME THE TROUBLE OF FINDING YOU!
THIS IS A NICE, QUIET, OUT-OF-THE-WAY SPOT! AIN'T NOBODY GONNA NOTICE NOTHIN'--
--WHEN I KILL YOU!
6

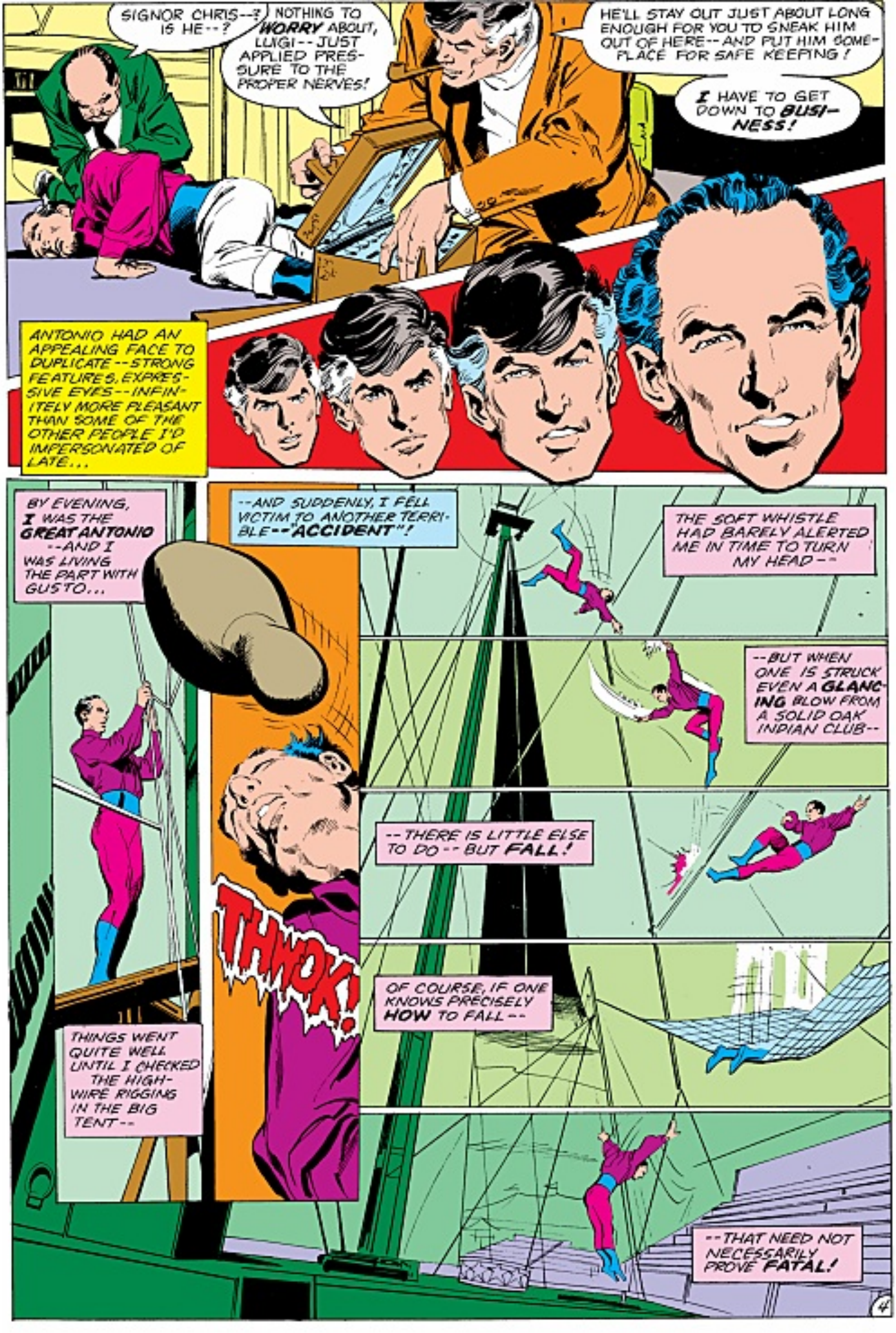
DANCER'S FINGER TIGHTENED ON THE TRIGGER JUST AS I PULLED THE SUPPORT ROPES-- AND THE FALLING SANDBAG SENT HIS GUN FLYING!...
HUH?
THE WHOLE SCENE SEEMED LIKE A TIRED CLICHÉ--BUT AT THAT MOMENT, I WAS NOT COMPLAINING...
THUD
BLAM!
TWENTY YEARS HADN'T CHANGED DANCER MUCH -- HE WAS STILL FAST! INSTINCTIVELY, HE LUNGED FOR HIS GUN --
--BUT I WAS STILL FASTER!
UUNNFF!
NO WAY, DANCER! I'VE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR THIS!
YOU MOVE GOOD FOR A FAT MAN--BUT I'VE BEEN IN THIS BUSINESS FOR TWENTY YEARS--
--AND I AIN'T NO EASY MARK!
DANCER'S AIM WAS EXCEPTIONAL! HE'D KNOCKED ME TOWARDS HIS GUN--
--AND I WASN'T TOO PROUD TO MAKE A MOVE FOR IT...
UH-UH, FATSO--
YOU AIN'T GETTING YOUR HANDS ON MY "PIECE" IF I CAN HELP IT--
AND I CAN...
HELP...
UUNNGG!
THWAAM!
7

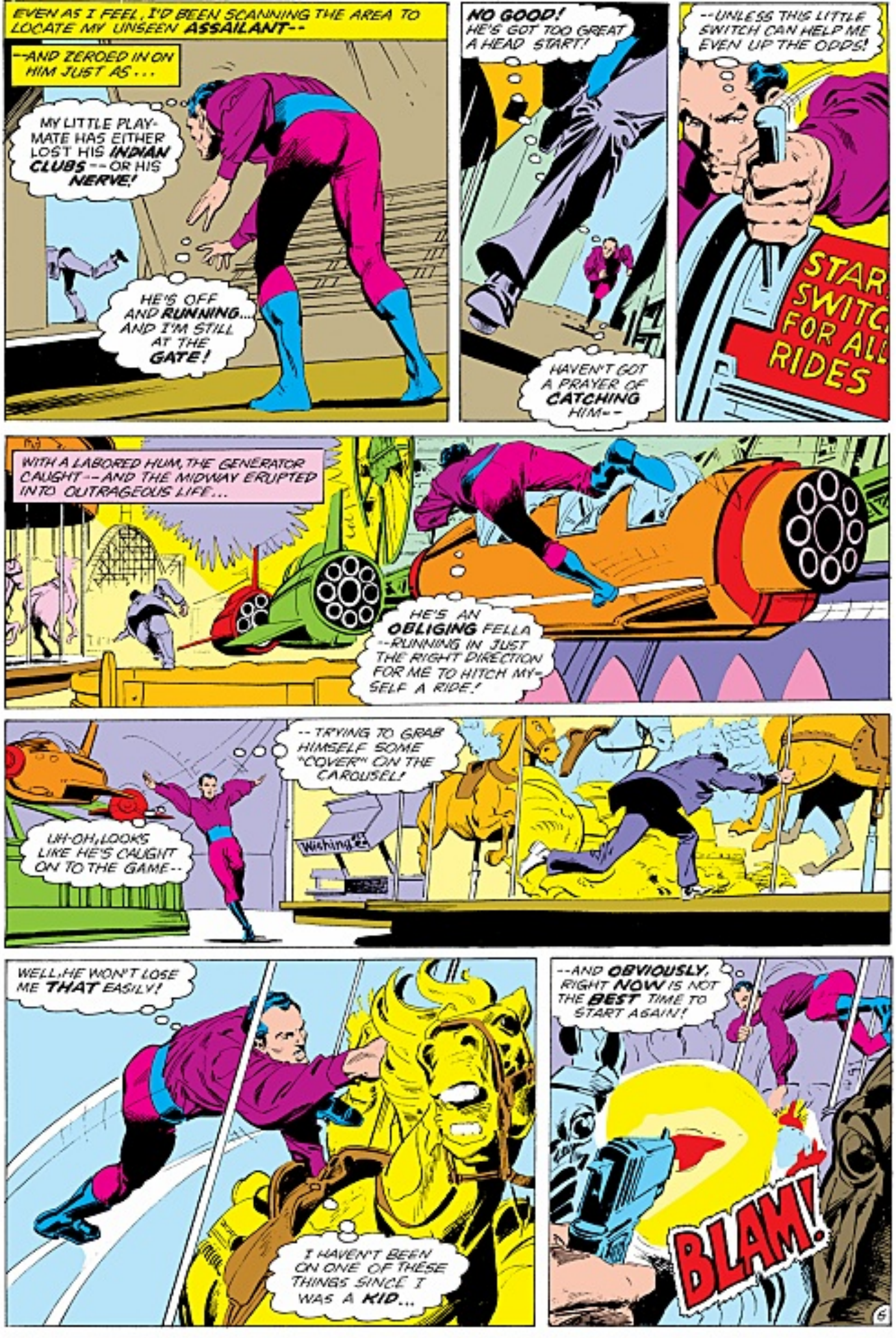
I HAD DANCER COVERED LONG BEFORE HE COULD GET TO HIS FEET...
WH-WHAT ARE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT, WALSH? WH-WHAT AM I TO YOU?
ALL RIGHT, ANIMAL-- IT'S OVER!
I'VE WAITED MORE THAN HALF MY LIFE FOR THIS MOMENT!
DON'T YOU KNOW, DANCER?
YOU'RE THE ANIMAL WHO KILLED MY FATHER!
NO-- NOT YOU!!
MY MIND WAS BLANK--FURY CONTROLLED ME COMPLETELY! ALL I COULD SEE WAS THE MAN WHO MURDERED MY FATHER-- THE MAN I'D WAITED TWO DECADES TO FIND! MY FINGER BEGAN TO TIGHTEN ON THE TRIGGER--
--AND THEN SOMETHING HAPPENED TO DANCER...
NO-- PLEASE DON'T!
PLEASE DON'T KILL ME--!
PLEASE--!
TWENTY YEARS--TWENTY YEARS OF SUSPICION--OF ANXIETY-- OF WAITING FOR THE INEVITABLE DAY WHEN THE TABLES WOULD BE TURNED--HAD TAKEN THEIR TOLL OF DANCER...
PL-PLEASE-- PLEASE DON'T HURT ME--! I'LL BE GOOD! I PROMISE I'LL BE GOOD! PL-PLEASE-- ;SOB; PLEASE--!
MY RAGE--MY RESOLVE--DRAINED SLOWLY OUT OF ME--AS I WATCHED DANCER'S FACE COLLAPSE INTO MADNESS...
PLEASE, DADDY-- PLEASE DON'T HIT ME--
PLEASE DON'T HURT ME! I PROMISE I WON'T DO IT ANY MORE!
I'LL BE A GOOD BOY, DADDY--I'LL BE GOOD--
IT'S ALL RIGHT, SON--IT'S ALL RIGHT! YOU'RE SAFE! NOBODY'S GOING TO HURT YOU!
NOBODY WILL EVER HURT YOU AGAIN!
;SOB;
;SOB;
;SOB;
8
AND I STAYED WITH DANCER, COMFORTING HIM--UNTIL THE AUTHORITIES CAME TO TAKE HIM AWAY...
Next: "The SHORT-WALK-TO-DISASTER CONTRACT!"
NEXT ISSUE ON SALE ON OR ABOUT MAR. 29TH


THIS IS CALLED "RANDORI", MEANING "PLAY"...
IT IS AN EXCERCISE--
--AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE--
--WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED--
--FROM THE "SENSEI"--
--WHICH, IN JAPANESE, MEANS "TEACHER"--
--BUT WHEN YOUR NAME IS CHRISTOPHER CHANCE-- AND THEY CALL YOU . . .
THE HUMAN TARGET
--YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO "PLAY"! YOU HAVE TO BE GOOD-- EVEN BETTER THAN YOUR TEACHER-- BECAUSE SOME DAY-- FOR ANY STRANGE REASON-- THIS MIGHT NOT BE AN EXERCISE--
--AND THAT TEACHER MAY WELL BE TRYING TO KILL YOU!
LEN WEIN WRITER— NEAL ADAMS DICK GIORDANO ARTISTS— JULIUS SCHWARTZ EDITOR—
"The SHORT-WALK-TO-DISASTER CONTRACT!"
CLAUSE #1 "I Have a Cousin In the Business..."
1


AS THE SENSEI AND I FINISHED, I HEARD LUIGI ENTER MY PRIVATE GYM--AND I SENSED AN ANXIOUSNESS IN MY ROTUND FRIEND THAT I'D NEVER BEFORE NOTICED...
SIGNOR CHRIS--PLEASE--I NO MEAN TO INTERRUPT--BUT I MUST TALK TO YOU, --URGENT!
IN A MOMENT, LUIGI--PLEASE!
I APOLOGIZED TO THE DEPARTING SENSEI-- THEN TURNED TO LUIGI...
I NEED HELP, SIGNOR CHRIS--SOMETHING ONLY YOU CAN DO--!
I WANT TO HIRE YOU--TO POSE AS MY COUSIN!
WHAT USE WOULD YOUR RELATIVE HAVE FOR THE SERVICES OF A PROFESSIONAL "VICTIM"?
"SOMEDAY, HIS PRIDE--IT HAD TO BRING HIM TROUBLE..."
MY COUSIN, ANTONIO--HE'S A PROUD, ANGRY MAN--
BE REASONABLE, ANTONIO! THE MORGAN SYNDICATE IS OFFERING US TWICE WHAT THIS FLEA-BITTEN CIRCUS IS WORTH!
I'M SORRY, MARTIN--BUT THIS SHOW IS MY LIFE! I'M NOT GOING TO SELL!
ALL WE NEED IS PUBLICITY--SOMETHING TO BRING US TO PEOPLE'S ATTENTION--
SOMETHING LIKE WALKING ACROSS NIAGARA FALLS--ON A TIGHTROPE!
NOW I KNOW YOU'RE CRAZY, ANTONIO! ALL THAT WOULD GET YOU IS A BROKEN NECK!
"AND THE PARTNER, HE MUST HAVE REALIZED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF ANTONIO DID SUCCEED--BECAUSE, ALL OF A SUDDEN, THERE STARTED TO BE "ACCIDENTS" AT THE CIRCUS--"
BUT, ANTONIO--HE INSISTED! HE BET HIS PARTNER HALF THE CIRCUS THAT THE WALK WOULD SUCCEED!
--ACCIDENTS THAT HAVE JUST MISSED KILLING ANTONIO TWICE!
2

I TRY TO TALK ANTONIO OUT OF THIS CRAZY THING--BUT HE NO LISTEN TO ME!
THAT'S WHY I COME TO YOU, SIGNOR CHRIS! YOU THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HELP ANTONIO NOW!
I GOT SOME MONEY SAVED, SIGNOR CHRIS-- I PAY YOU ANY-THING YOU ASK!
YOU'RE STILL PAYING ME OFF IN FREE RENT FROM THE LAST TIME YOU HIRED ME, LUIGI--
--BUT WE'LL WORK SOMETHING OUT!
LET ME GET OUT OF THIS "GI" AND INTO SOMETHING LESS COMFORT-ABLE-- AND WE'LL TALK WITH YOUR COUSIN!
WE ARRIVED AT THE CIRCUS CAMP JUST OUTSIDE NIAGARA FALLS IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON-- AND I QUICKLY FOUND COUSIN ANTONIO TO BE EVERYTHING LUIGI SAID HE WAS...
ANTONIO--PLEASE --LISTEN TO THE MAN!
SORRY, LUIGI --BUT NO!
NOBODY IS TAKING MY PLACE FOR ANYTHING!
OURS IS AN OLD, PROUD NAME! HOW COULD IT SURVIVE MY TAKING THE CREDIT FOR SOMEONE ELSE'S FEAT?
NIAGARA FALLS
NO, LUIGI-- NO ONE BUT THE GREAT ANTONIO WILL WALK THE GIANT FALLS! IT WILL BE THE CROWN-ING ACHIEVEMENT OF MY CAREER!
MR. CHANCE, I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN-- BUT I'M AFRAID YOU MADE A LONG, UNCOMFORTABLE TRIP FOR NOTHING!
STILL... I WANT TO THANK YOU, ANYWAY!
NO THANKS NECESSARY, ANTONIO! I UNDERSTAND YOUR FEELINGS TOTALLY!
I ALSO AM A MAN OF FIRM COMMIT-MENTS--
-- AND WHEN I ACCEPT A CONTRACT, I MAKE GOOD ON IT!
UUUNNH!
3


SIGNOR CHRIS--? IS HE--?
NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, LUIGI--JUST APPLIED PRESSURE TO THE PROPER NERVES!
HE'LL STAY OUT JUST ABOUT LONG ENOUGH FOR YOU TO SNEAK HIM OUT OF HERE--AND PUT HIM SOMEPLACE FOR SAFE KEEPING!
I HAVE TO GET DOWN TO BUSINESS!
ANTONIO HAD AN APPEALING FACE TO DUPLICATE--STRONG FEATURES, EXPRESSIVE EYES--INFINITELY MORE PLEASANT THAN SOME OF THE OTHER PEOPLE I'D IMPERSONATED OF LATE...
BY EVENING, I WAS THE GREAT ANTONIO--AND I WAS LIVING THE PART WITH GUSTO...
--AND SUDDENLY, I FELL VICTIM TO ANOTHER TERRIBLE--"ACCIDENT"!
THE SOFT WHISTLE HAD BARELY ALERTED ME IN TIME TO TURN MY HEAD--
--BUT WHEN ONE IS STRUCK EVEN A GLANCING BLOW FROM A SOLID OAK INDIAN CLUB--
--THERE IS LITTLE ELSE TO DO--BUT FALL!
THWOK!
OF COURSE, IF ONE KNOWS PRECISELY HOW TO FALL--
THINGS WENT QUITE WELL UNTIL I CHECKED THE HIGH-WIRE RIGGING IN THE BIG TENT--
--THAT NEED NOT NECESSARILY PROVE FATAL!
4


EVEN AS I FEEL, I'D BEEN SCANNING THE AREA TO LOCATE MY UNSEEN ASSAILANT--
--AND ZEROED IN ON HIM JUST AS...
MY LITTLE PLAYMATE HAS EITHER LOST HIS INDIAN CLUBS--OR HIS NERVE!
HE'S OFF AND RUNNING... AND I'M STILL AT THE GATE!
NO GOOD! HE'S GOT TOO GREAT A HEAD START!
HAVEN'T GOT A PRAYER OF CATCHING HIM--
--UNLESS THIS LITTLE SWITCH CAN HELP ME EVEN UP THE ODDS!
STAR SWITCH FOR ALL RIDES
WITH A LABORED HUM, THE GENERATOR CAUGHT--AND THE MIDWAY ERUPTED INTO OUTRAGEOUS LIFE...
HE'S AN OBLIGING FELLA --RUNNING IN JUST THE RIGHT DIRECTION FOR ME TO HITCH MYSELF A RIDE!
--TRYING TO GRAB HIMSELF SOME "COVER" ON THE CAROUSEL!
UH-OH, LOOKS LIKE HE'S CAUGHT ON TO THE GAME--
Wishing
WELL, HE WON'T LOSE ME THAT EASILY!
I HAVEN'T BEEN ON ONE OF THESE THINGS SINCE I WAS A KID...
--AND OBVIOUSLY, RIGHT NOW IS NOT THE BEST TIME TO START AGAIN!
BLAM!
6

BEEOW
ZING
WHOEVER THAT GUY IS, HE'S GOOD!
HE HAS ME SO BUSY DUCK-ING, I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET A LOOK AT HIS FACE!
BUT THAT SITUATION IS ABOUT TO CHANGE!
THOSE RIDES HAVE GIVEN ME JUST THE EDGE I NEED--
--AND IT WON'T TAKE ME LONG TO CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN US!
GOT TO MOVE -- REALLY POUR ON THE SPEED--!
HE'S LOSING GROUND-- FAST!
JUST HAVE TO CLOSE IN ON HIM ONCE WE ROUND THAT CORNER AND--
THAT'S FAR ENOUGH, MR. CHANCE! I SAID NOBODY WOULD REPLACE ME--
--AND I MEANT IT!
I'M GOING TO STOP YOU, MR. CHANCE -- ONE WAY OR ANOTHER!
NEXT ISSUE: CONCLUDING "THE SHORT-WALK-TO-DISASTER CONTRACT!"
6
NEXT ISSUE ON SALE DURING THE LAST WEEK IN MAY

IT STARTED AS A FAVOR FOR A FRIEND -- FOR LUIGI, MY LANDLORD, WHOSE COUSIN, ANTONIO, HAD WAGERED HIS HALF-SHARE OF A CIRCUS THAT HE COULD WALK A TIGHTROPE ACROSS NIAGARA FALLS...
...ONLY SOMEONE WAS TRYING TO MAKE SURE HE DIDN'T LIVE THAT LONG!
EASILY, LUIGI CONVINCED ME TO IMPERSONATE HIS COUSIN --
--BUT CONVINCING ANTONIO WAS ANOTHER THING ENTIRELY!
THAT TOOK DECEPTION-- AND A NUMBING NERVE PINCH!
LUIGI TUCKED THE REAL ANTONIO SAFELY AWAY-- AS I BECAME A REASONABLE FACSIMILE...
NOW I WAS THE WOULD-BE KILLER'S INTENDED VICTIM--
THWOK
--AND IT DID NOT TAKE HIM VERY LONG TO STRIKE!
BUT SURVIVING THAT KIND OF "ACCIDENT" IS WHAT I DO FOR A LIVING!...
WITHIN SECONDS, I'D REGAINED MY FEET-- THEN PURSUED MY UNKNOWN ATTACKER ACROSS THE SILENT CIRCUS GROUNDS-- AROUND A BLIND CORNER--
--AND RAN STRAIGHT INTO THE TUNNEL-LIKE MUZZLE OF AN ANGRY GUN!
SOME DAYS, IT JUST DOESN'T PAY TO GET OUT OF BED!
HOW DARE YOU REPLACE THE GREAT ANTONIO? I COULD KILL YOU FOR THAT!
NO, ANTONIO-- YOU WIN!
SEE? I'M TAKING OFF MY DISGUISE...
--TO REVEAL...
CHRISTOPHER CHANCE--
THE HUMAN TARGET
"The SHORT-WALK-TO-DISASTER CONTRACT!"
CLAUSE #2 "THE SHORTEST DISTANCE BETWEEN TWO POINTS..."
LEN WEIN WRITER - DICK GIORDANO ARTIST - JULIUS SCHWARTZ EDITOR -

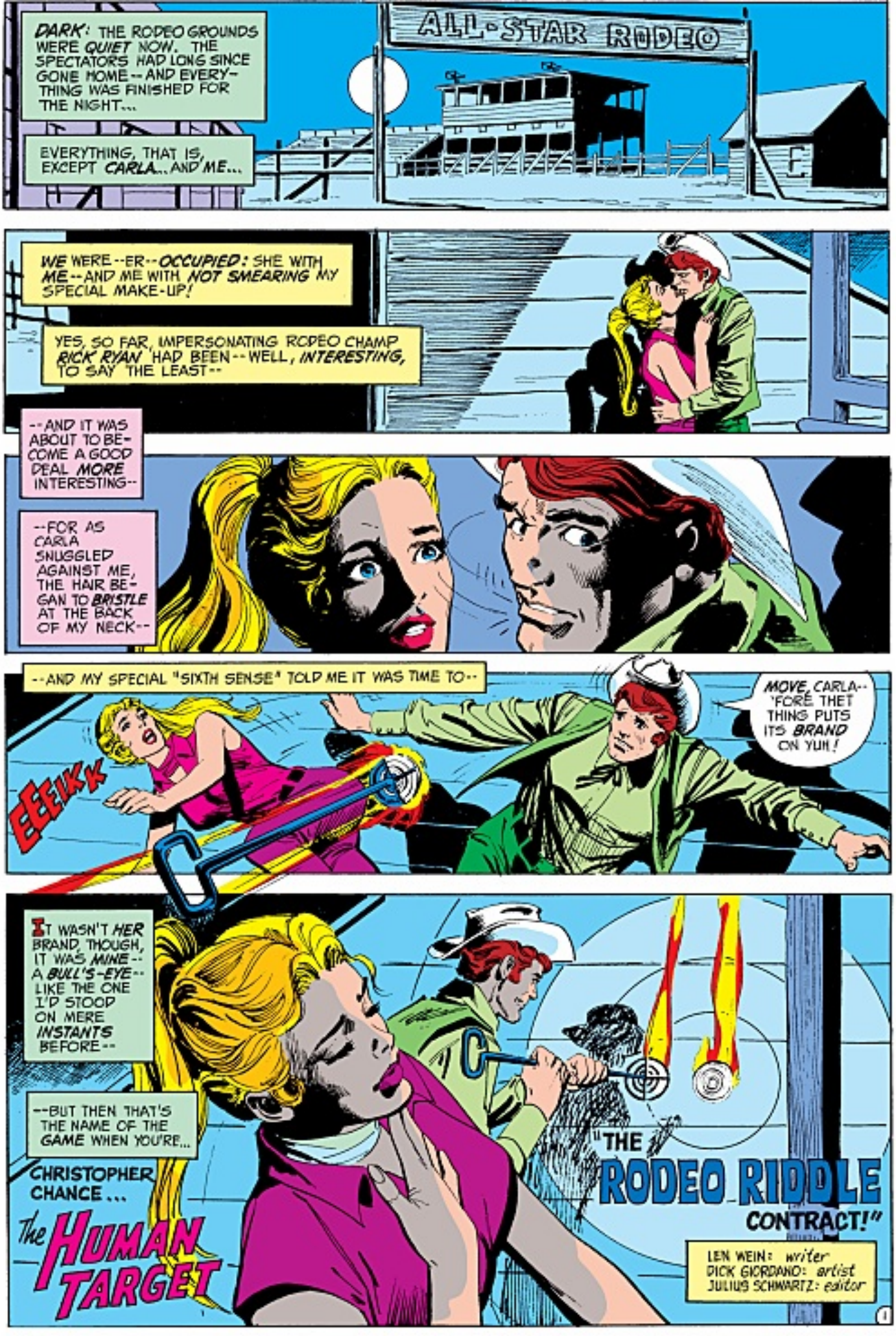
A MAGICIAN'S GREATEST ASSET IS HIS ABILITY TO MISDIRECT THE ATTENTION OF HIS AUDIENCE. IT'S A TALENT I'VE MADE USE OF, TOO.
...THIS WAS ONE OF THOSE TIMES!
HUH?
BAD MOVE, ANTONIO! YOU SHOULD NEVER GET DISTRACTED WHILE YOU'RE HOLDING A GUN!
DON'T KNOW HOW HE GOT AWAY FROM LUIGI--BUT ANTONIO'S NOT THE GUY I JUST CHASED ACROSS THE CAMP!
HE'S NOT WINDED--NOT EVEN SWEATING!
THWAK
NO...MY REAL ATTACKER MUST HAVE RUN PAST ANTONIO--JUST BEFORE I RAN INTO HIM!
I'D HAVE CAUGHT THE KILLER IF THIS FOOL HAD LISTENED TO REASON--
--WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT HE'S GOING TO DO NOW!
OKAY, ANTONIO--THE WAR IS OVER! NOW YOU'LL HEAR ME OUT--
--OR I'LL FIX IT SO YOU CAN'T WALK ACROSS THE STREET, LET ALONE NIAGARA!
ALL RIGHT--ALL RIGHT! TALK--I'LL LISTEN!
LISTEN--AND THINK! WHAT I'M DOING IS FOR YOUR BENEFIT!
ALL I ASK IS THAT YOU STAY OUT OF SIGHT A FEW DAYS--LET ME FLUSH OUT YOUR ASSASSIN--
--THEN YOU CAN WALK A TIGHTROPE TO THE MOON FOR ALL I CARE!
YOU ARE RIGHT, MR. CHANCE--FORGIVE ME! AT TIMES, I STUMBLE OVER MY EGO!
BUT TELL ME--HOW DOES AN AMATEUR LIKE YOURSELF EXPECT TO WALK THE NIAGARA--WITHOUT FALLING TO YOUR DEATH?
ANTONIO, MY FRIEND--THAT'S THE ONE PART I'M NOT CONCERNED ABOUT!
YOU JUST LEAVE EVERYTHING TO ME!
2

NIAGARA FALLS: EACH MINUTE, 6,000,000 GALLONS OF CHURNING WATER PLUNGE 167 FEET INTO THE NIAGARA RIVER THEN FLOW PEACEFULLY DOWN TO BUFFALO, NEW YORK...
THE DAY WAS CLOUDY--WITH A HINT OF WIND IN THE AIR. THE NEWS-MEDIA HAD TURNED OUT FULL FORCE TO WATCH ME RISK MY NECK...
ANTONIO HAD GOTTEN THE PUBLICITY HE SOUGHT...
SHE'S ALL CHECKED OUT, MR. ANTONIO--RIG IS SET TO GO!
SO ANY TIME YOU'RE READY--?
THE GREAT ANTONIO IS ALWAYS READY, MY MAN!
RIGHT! WELL, GOOD LUCK TO YA NOW!
DON'T GET YOUR FEET WET!
ANTONIO'S PARTNER, MARTIN, HASN'T SHOWN--AND FOR AN EVENT LIKE THIS? HMM--THAT NARROWS DOWN THE WHO PART OF THIS CAPER--
ONLY QUESTION NOW IS--HOW?
THERE--ER--ANTONIO! YOUR COSTUME, SHE IS ALL SET!
BONA FORTUNA, MY COUSIN!
GRAZIE, LUIGI--I WILL SEE YOU SOON--
I BOWED ONCE OR TWICE TO THE ASSEMBLED THRONG--THEN CLIMBED TO THE PLATFORM--TOOK MY BALANCING-POLE IN HAND--AND TOOK MY FIRST STEP...
NOW THERE WAS NO TURNING BACK!
3

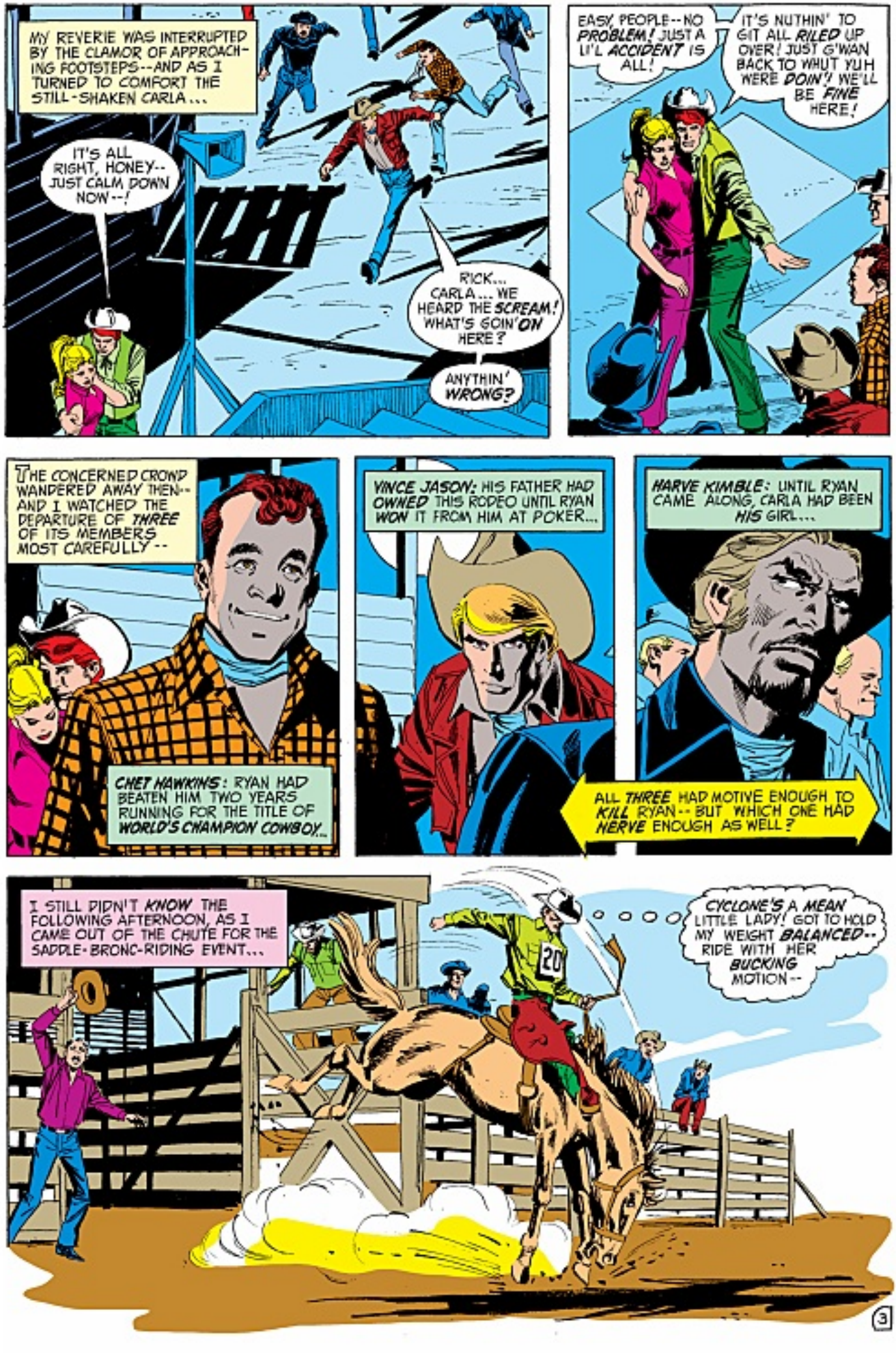
THE TUMULTOUS ROAR OF THE GREAT FALLS BLENDED WITH THE GROWLING WHIRR OF THE NEWS-COPTER THAT HOVERED ABOVE ME AS I MOVED SLOWLY, CAUTIOUSLY, ACROSS THE MISTY EXPANSE OF SPACE...
A SUDDEN, UNEXPECTED GUST OF WIND NEARLY HURLED ME FROM THE CABLE--
--AND MY MUSCLES SCREAMED AS I STRUGGLED TO REGAIN MY FOOTING...
THEN, MY BALANCE RECAPTURED, I WALKED ON...
--AND I COULD ALMOST HEAR THE APPRECIATIVE MURMUR OF THE MILLING CROWD BELOW...
IT HAPPENED JUST ABOUT WHERE I HAD FIGURED IT WOULD--
--AS I REACHED THE HALFWAY POINT IN MY FAR-FROM-CASUAL STROLL..
IT CAME WITH THE PAINFUL SOUND OF A RETAINING WIRE SNAPPING--
--WITH THE SUDDEN SENSE OF WEIGHTLESSNESS AS THE CABLE THAT SUPPORTED ME GREW SLACK--
--AND, AS ALL THINGS MUST IN SUCH A CASE...
--I FELL--
4

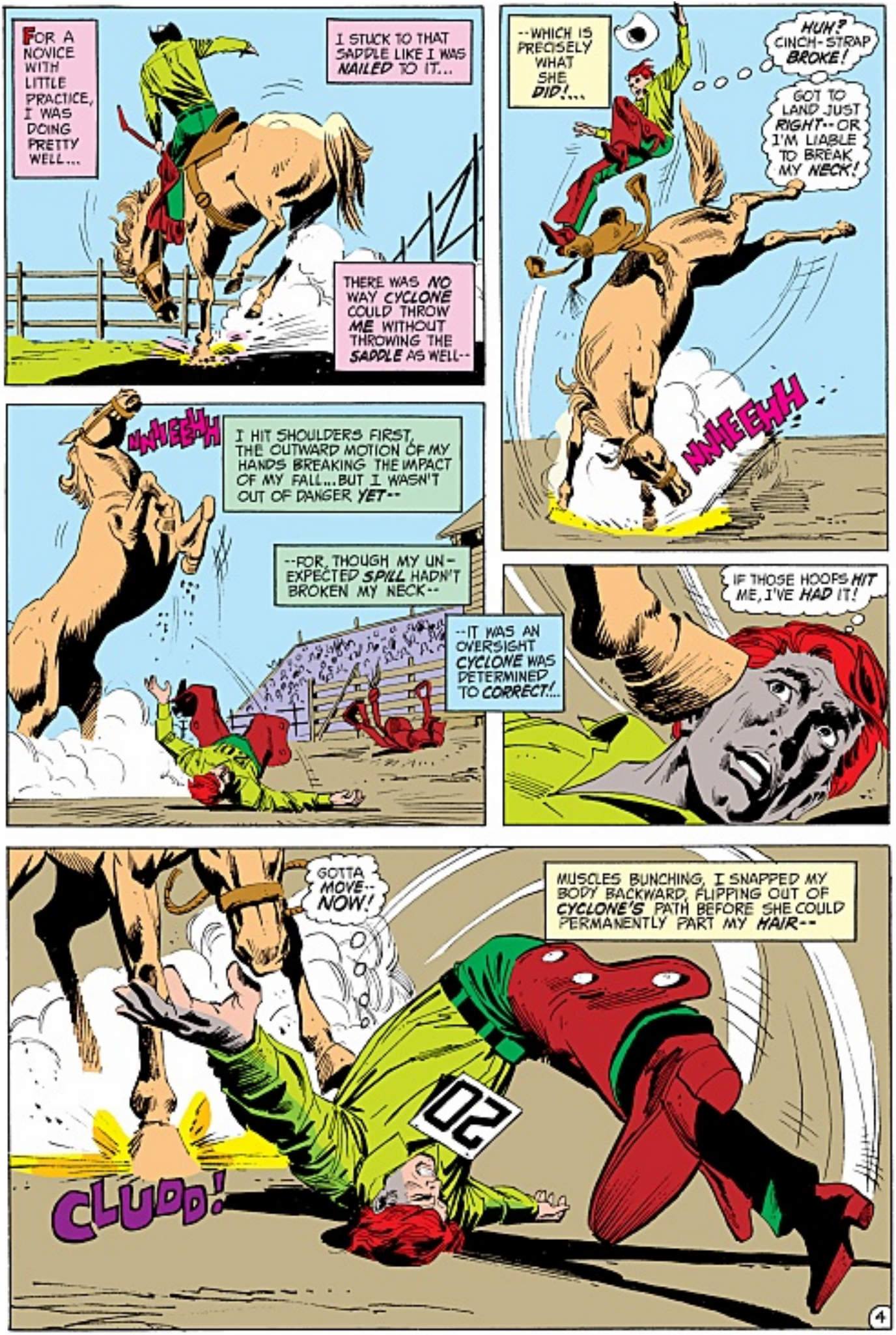
--FELL ABOUT THREE FEET--
--THEN HUNG SUSPENDED, DANGLING LIKE A PUPPET IN MID-AIR!...
THE CROWD WAS NO LONGER MURMURING NOW; THEY WERE GASPING, STUTTERING, TRYING TO COMPREHEND WHAT THEIR WIDENED EYES TOLD THEM THEY SAW--
--AND, IF THEY HAD TROUBLE EXPLAINING ME FLOATING--
--THE SIGHT OF ME FLYING MUST HAVE DRIVEN THEM, ALL STRAIGHT UP THE FALLS!
WELL, MAYBE NOT ALL--FOR MY FLIGHT SENT ONE MAN SCURRYING FOR COVER--
--JUST LIKE THE RAT HE WAS!
NO- NO- IT'S NOT POSSIBLE!
MORE THAN POSSIBLE, FRIEND-- IF YOU MUST KNOW!
BY THE WAY, YOU CAN STOP RUNNING NOW!
THE ONLY PLACE YOU'RE GOING IS--
5

--DOWN-- AND OUT!
EVERYONE ELSE WAS NOT FAR BEHIND ME...
IT'S ALL OVER, ANTONIO!
THIS CHARACTER WILL BE OUT OF THE MURDER RACKET FOR A VERY LONG TIME!
BUT WHO IS HE? WHY DID HE WANT TO KILL ME?
TWO CAN PLAY AT THE MAKE-UP GAME, ANTONIO!
PRESENTING YOUR PARTNER, MARTIN -- WHO WAS REALLY STUPID ENOUGH TO BELIEVE PEOPLE WOULD THINK YOUR DEATH AN ACCIDENT!
YES, THE "ACCIDENT"! IN HEAVEN'S NAME, MAN --
--HOW DID YOU ACCOMPLISH THAT?
"IT WAS ALL DONE WITH WIRES, ANTONIO -- ATTACHED TO A THEATRICAL FLYING-HARNESS I WORE UNDER MY COSTUME..."
"THE WIRES WERE CONTROLLED FROM THAT HELICOPTER THAT SEEMED TO BE FILMING ME WHILE I MADE THE WALK..."
"THERE WAS ENOUGH LEEWAY FOR ME TO CONTROL MY OWN MOTIONS -- BUT NOT THE SLIGHTEST POSSIBILITY OF MY FALLING..."
I BANKED ON THE FACT MARTIN WOULD TRY TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE AN ACCIDENT -- AND TAMPER WITH THE CABLE! IF HE'D DECIDED TO SHOOT ME INSTEAD --
WELL, ANTONIO -- I SUPPOSE YOU WOULD HAVE HAD TO FINISH THE WALK YOURSELF!
The End
6


DARK: THE RODEO GROUNDS WERE QUIET NOW. THE SPECTATORS HAD LONG SINCE GONE HOME -- AND EVERYTHING WAS FINISHED FOR THE NIGHT...
EVERYTHING, THAT IS, EXCEPT CARLA... AND ME...
ALL-STAR RODEO
WE WERE--ER--OCCUPIED: SHE WITH ME--AND ME WITH NOT SMEARING MY SPECIAL MAKE-UP!
YES, SO FAR, IMPERSONATING RODEO CHAMP RICK RYAN HAD BEEN -- WELL, INTERESTING, TO SAY THE LEAST--
--AND IT WAS ABOUT TO BECOME A GOOD DEAL MORE INTERESTING--
--FOR AS CARLA SNUGGLED AGAINST ME, THE HAIR BEGAN TO BRISTLE AT THE BACK OF MY NECK--
--AND MY SPECIAL "SIXTH SENSE" TOLD ME IT WAS TIME TO--
EEEIKK
MOVE, CARLA-- 'FORE THET THING PUTS ITS BRAND ON YUH!
IT WASN'T HER BRAND, THOUGH, IT WAS MINE -- A BULL'S-EYE -- LIKE THE ONE I'D STOOD ON MERE INSTANTS BEFORE--
--BUT THEN THAT'S THE NAME OF THE GAME WHEN YOU'RE...
CHRISTOPHER CHANCE...
The HUMAN TARGET
"THE RODEO RIDDLE CONTRACT!"
LEN WEIN: writer
DICK GIORDANO: artist
JULIUS SCHWARTZ: editor
1

FOR SEVERAL LONG MOMENTS, I GAZED AT THE SMOLDERING IRON--AND THE SOUND OF STILL-SIZZLING METAL REMINDED ME WHY I WAS HERE...
THE MOTORCYCLE WAS NEW. I'D BEEN PUTTING IT THROUGH ITS PACES ON THE HILLS OUTSIDE BOSTON WHEN RYAN AND I FIRST MET...
MR. CHRISTOPHER CHANCE? I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YUH FER A MINUTE IF I COULD!
GOT A PROBLEM YUH COULD MEBBE HELP ME WITH!
I'D HEARD RYAN'S TYPE OF PROBLEM MANY TIMES BEFORE: SOMEONE WAS TRYING TO KILL HIM! HE DIDN'T KNOW WHO OR WHY--
--BUT IF I TOOK THE CONTRACT, IT WOULD BE MY JOB TO FIND OUT!
I TOOK THE CONTRACT-- AND, USING MAKE-UP AND MANNERISMS, I BECAME RICK RYAN...
2


MY REVERIE WAS INTERRUPTED BY THE CLAMOR OF APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS--AND AS I TURNED TO COMFORT THE STILL-SHAKEN CARLA...
IT'S ALL RIGHT, HONEY--JUST CALM DOWN NOW--!
RICK... CARLA... WE HEARD THE SCREAM! WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE?
ANYTHIN' WRONG?
EASY, PEOPLE--NO PROBLEM! JUST A LI'L ACCIDENT IS ALL!
IT'S NUTHIN' TO GIT ALL RILED UP OVER! JUST G'WAN BACK TO WHUT YUH WERE DOIN'! WE'LL BE FINE HERE!
THE CONCERNED CROWD WANDERED AWAY THEN--AND I WATCHED THE DEPARTURE OF THREE OF ITS MEMBERS MOST CAREFULLY--
CHET HAWKINS: RYAN HAD BEATEN HIM TWO YEARS RUNNING FOR THE TITLE OF WORLD'S CHAMPION COWBOY...
VINCE JASON: HIS FATHER HAD OWNED THIS RODEO UNTIL RYAN WON IT FROM HIM AT POKER...
HARVE KIMBLE: UNTIL RYAN CAME ALONG, CARLA HAD BEEN HIS GIRL...
ALL THREE HAD MOTIVE ENOUGH TO KILL RYAN--BUT WHICH ONE HAD NERVE ENOUGH AS WELL?
I STILL DIDN'T KNOW THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON, AS I CAME OUT OF THE CHUTE FOR THE SADDLE-BRONC-RIDING EVENT...
CYCLONE'S A MEAN LITTLE LADY! GOT TO HOLD MY WEIGHT BALANCED--RIDE WITH HER BUCKING MOTION--
20
3


FOR A NOVICE WITH LITTLE PRACTICE, I WAS DOING PRETTY WELL...
I STUCK TO THAT SADDLE LIKE I WAS NAILED TO IT...
THERE WAS NO WAY CYCLONE COULD THROW ME WITHOUT THROWING THE SADDLE AS WELL--
--WHICH IS PRECISELY WHAT SHE DID!...
HUH? CINCH-STRAP BROKE!
GOT TO LAND JUST RIGHT--OR I'M LIABLE TO BREAK MY NECK!
NNNEEHH
NNNEEHH
I HIT SHOULDERS FIRST, THE OUTWARD MOTION OF MY HANDS BREAKING THE IMPACT OF MY FALL...BUT I WASN'T OUT OF DANGER YET--
--FOR, THOUGH MY UN-EXPECTED SPILL HADN'T BROKEN MY NECK--
--IT WAS AN OVERSIGHT CYCLONE WAS DETERMINED TO CORRECT!...
IF THOSE HOOFS HIT ME, I'VE HAD IT!
GOTTA MOVE--NOW!
MUSCLES BUNCHING, I SNAPPED MY BODY BACKWARD, FLIPPING OUT OF CYCLONE'S PATH BEFORE SHE COULD PERMANENTLY PART MY HAIR--
CLUDD!
4

--AND IT WASN'T TILL WE GOT BACK TO THE STABLES THAT I DISCOVERED...
THIS WAS NO ACCIDENT! THAT CINCH-STRAP DIDN'T SNAP...
...IT WAS CUT ALMOST CLEAN THROUGH!
RICK-- NO! HOW DREADFUL!
YEAH, RYAN-- THAT'S REALLY A SHAME!
TOO BAD, RICK!
YEAH-- RIGHT! ANY IDEA WHO DID IT?
C'MON-- WHO ARE YUH KIDDIN'?
YOU DID IT!
I HADN'T REALLY KNOWN WHICH OF THEM I WAS POINTING THAT ACCUSING FINGER AT--
--BUT MY LITTLE RUSE WORKED--IN SPADES!
DON'T KNOW HOW YA FOUND ME OUT, RYAN--
--BUT YA AIN'T TAKIN' ME IN!
I'D STARTED TO DIVE FORWARD EVEN AS KIMBLE THREW-- BUT EVEN SO, THE PITCHFORK MISSED ME BY FRACTIONS OF AN INCH--
--BUT THE MOMENTARY DISTRACTION WAS ALL HARVE KIMBLE NEEDED-- TO MAKE A BREAK FOR FREEDOM...
OUTA MY WAY, YOU IDIOTS! AIN'T NOBODY HOLDING ME HERE NOW!
HARVE-- COME BACK! YOU HAVEN'T GOT A PRAYER!
5

BUT IT SEEMED KIMBLE WASN'T A PRAYING MAN. HE SLAMMED THE DOOR LOCKED BEHIND HIM ON HIS WAY OUT...
BY THE TIME THEY BREAK OPEN THAT DOOR, KIMBLE WILL BE GONE!
HE HAS TOO MUCH OF A HEADSTART-- UNLESS...
IT WAS IRONIC IN A WAY, I SUPPOSE.
THE HORSE LEFT BEHIND, SADDLED AND WAITING, WAS KIMBLE'S--
--AND WHEN VINCE AND CHET AT LAST BURST DOWN THE DOOR, I CAME OUT OF THE CHUTE LIKE A RODEO PRO!...
HEY, RICK-- WHAT IN BLUE BLAZES--?
THERE IS A RODEO EVENT CALLED BULL-DOGGING--
--IN WHICH THE RIDER CHASES DOWN A RUNAWAY CALF--
--LASSOES IT--
--DISMOUNTS--
--WRESTLES THE STEER TO THE GROUND--
-- THEN HOGTIES THREE OF ITS FOUR LIMBS--
--ALL WHILE RACING AGAINST THE CLOCK!
I MUST HAVE SET A NEW WORLD'S RECORD THAT AFTER-NOON!
6

AND WITH MY WOULD-BE KILLER SAFELY UNDER WRAPS, THERE WAS NO FURTHER NEED FOR MY DISGUISE...
I'LL BE A SIDEWINDER'S SUPPER, MR. CHANCE--IF THAT WASN'T JUST ABOUT THE SWEETEST PIECE'A ROPIN' I EVER DONE SAW!
A-A-ANOTHER RICK--? I--I DON'T UNDERSTAND--

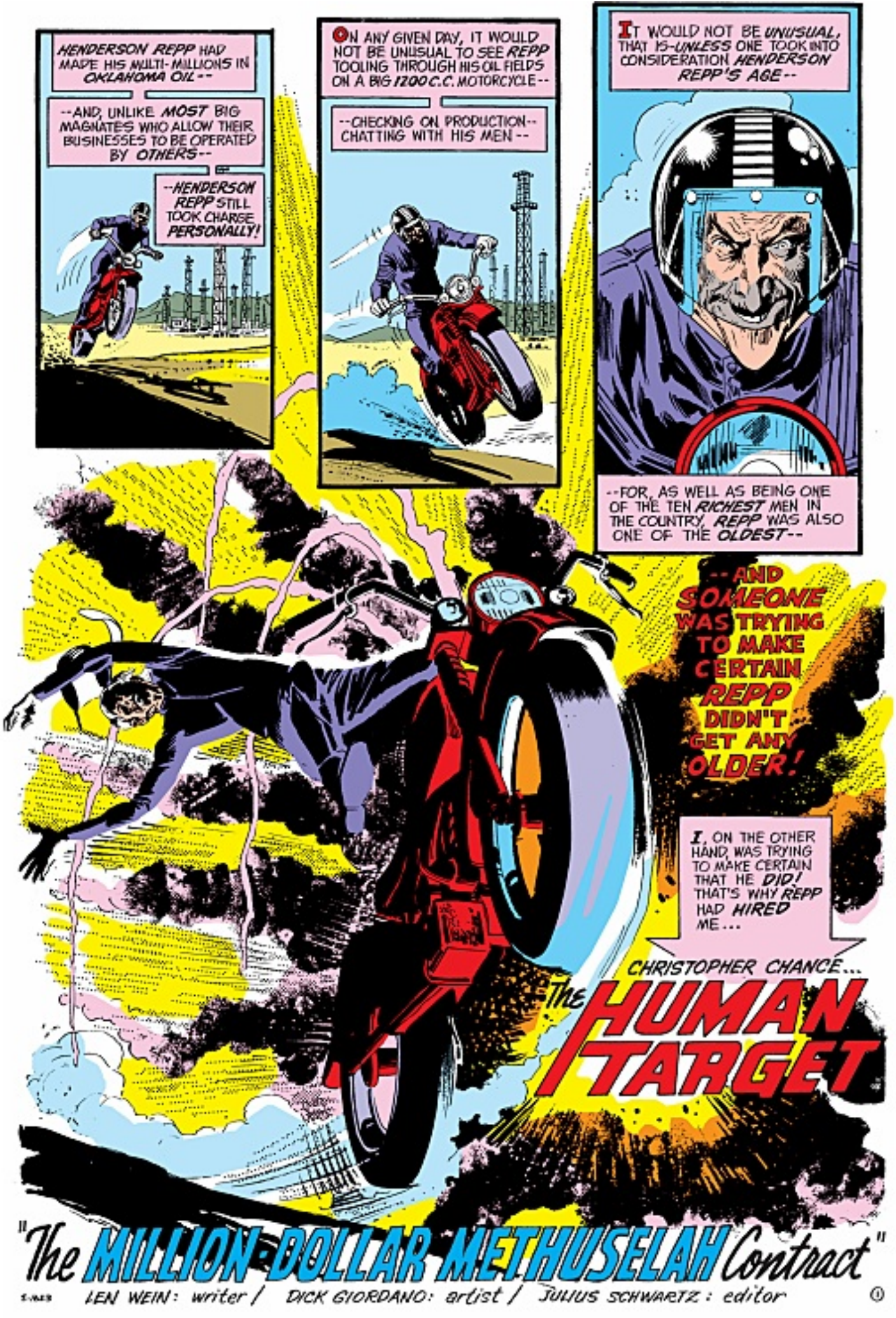
THEN, IN CLASSIC MOVIE DETECTIVE FASHION, I GATHERED EVERYONE TOGETHER TO EXPLAIN...
APPARENTLY, KIMBLE'S MOTIVE WAS JEALOUSY! HE MUST HAVE BEEN SEETHING WITH IT SINCE YOU AND CARLA BECAME ENGAGED, RYAN!
IT SEEMS HE TRIED TO KILL YOU--BEFORE THE WEDDING COULD TAKE PLACE!

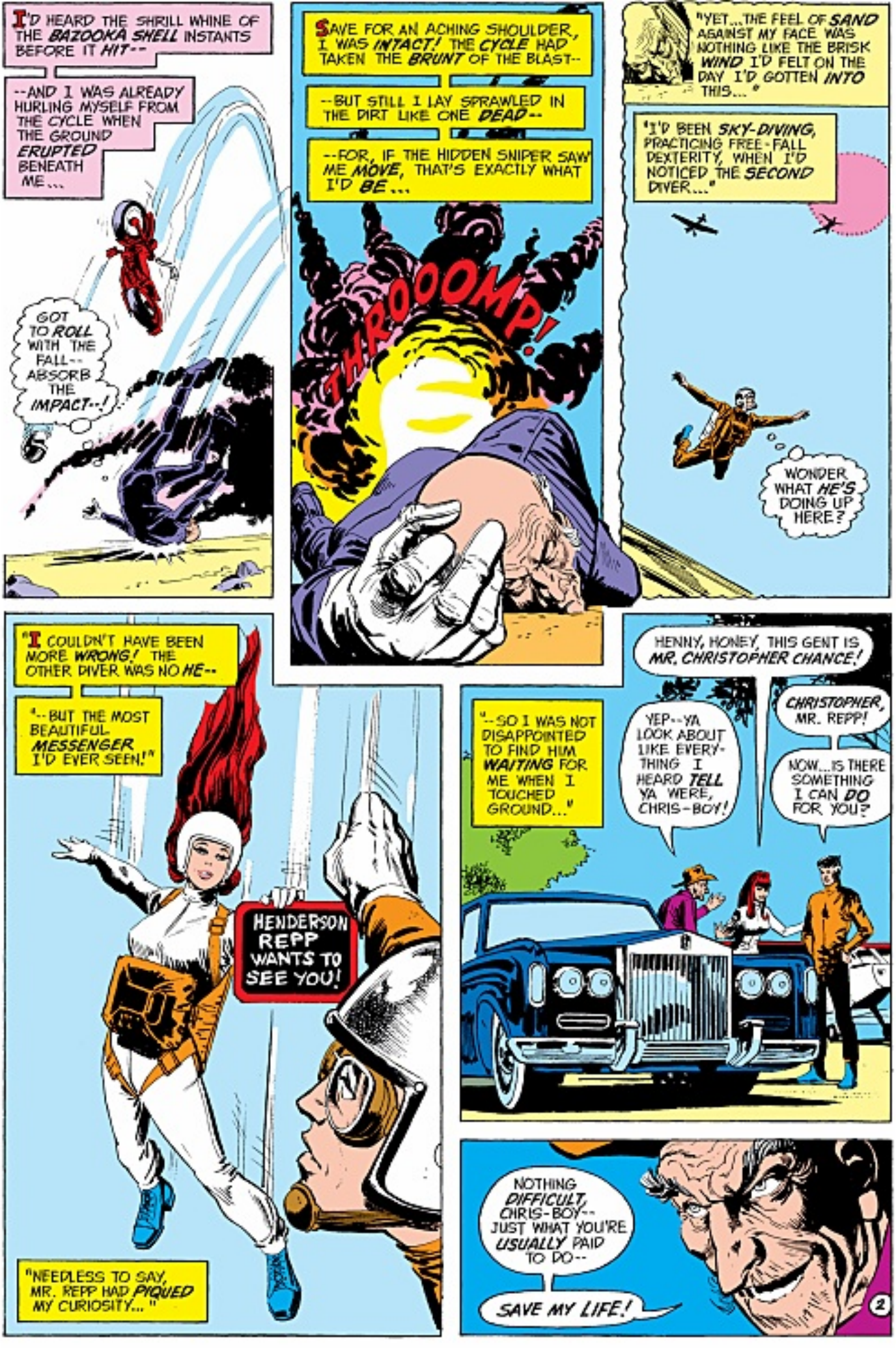
B-BUT HE WASN'T SUPPOSED TO REALLY KILL YOU, RICK! THAT WASN'T PART OF THE PLAN AT--
GOODWIN!
PLAN? CARLA, HONEY--YUH DON'T MEAN THAT YOU--?

I--I ONLY WANTED VINCE TO SCARE YOU, DARLING--MAKE YOU REALIZE HOW PRECIOUS OUR TIME TOGETHER IS!
I MEAN--WHEN YOU JUST KEPT PUTTING OUR WEDDING OFF--AND OFF--I WAS AFRAID--
--I'D NEVER MARRY YOU? OH, CARLA, HONEY--PLEASE--!

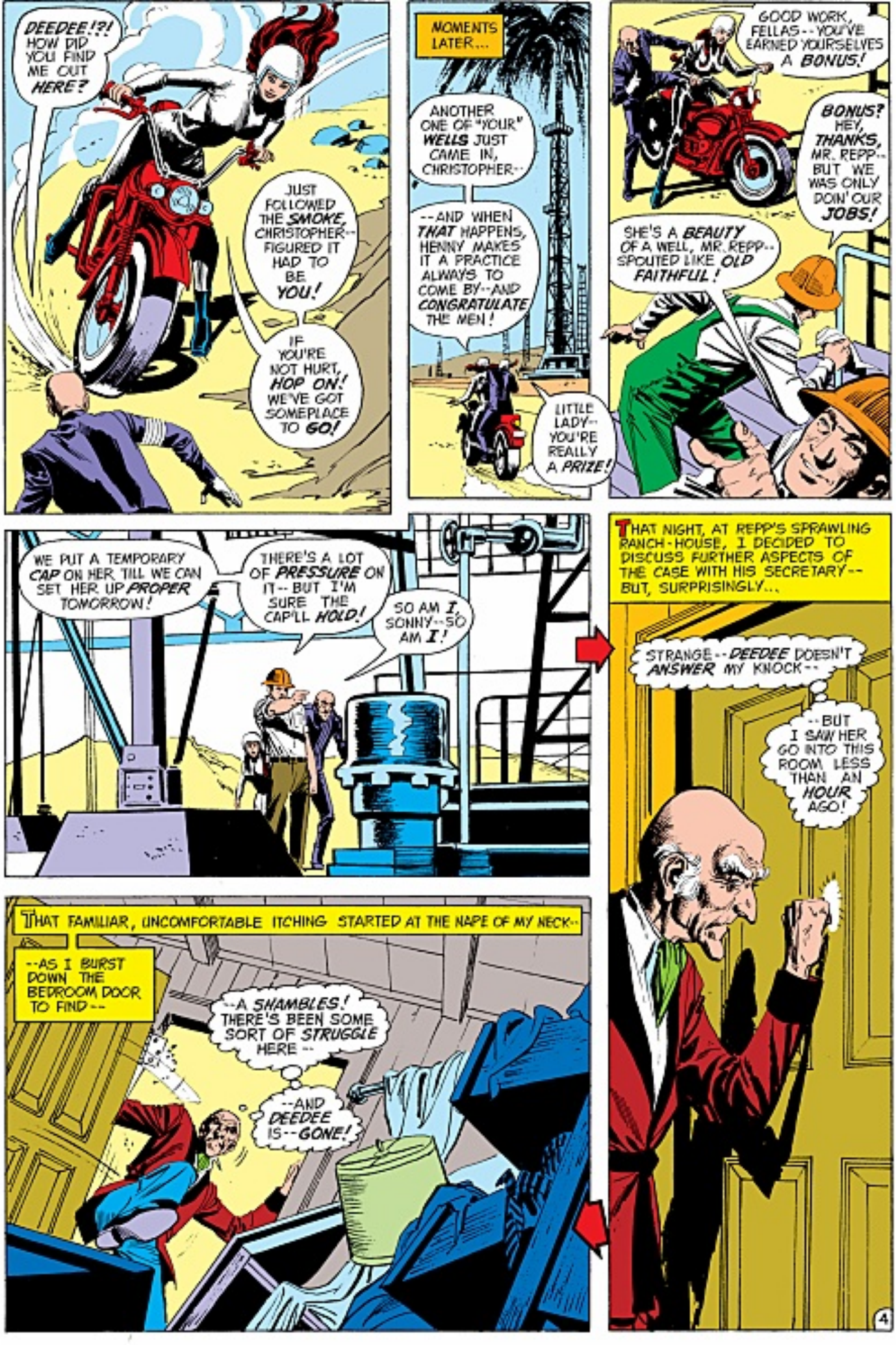
I'LL MARRY YUH! OF COURSE I'LL MARRY YUH--TOMORROW, IF YUH WANT!
TOMORROW? WHAT ABOUT TODAY?
TODAY, IT IS, THEN--SOON'S WE KIN FIND US SOME WITNESSES!
7

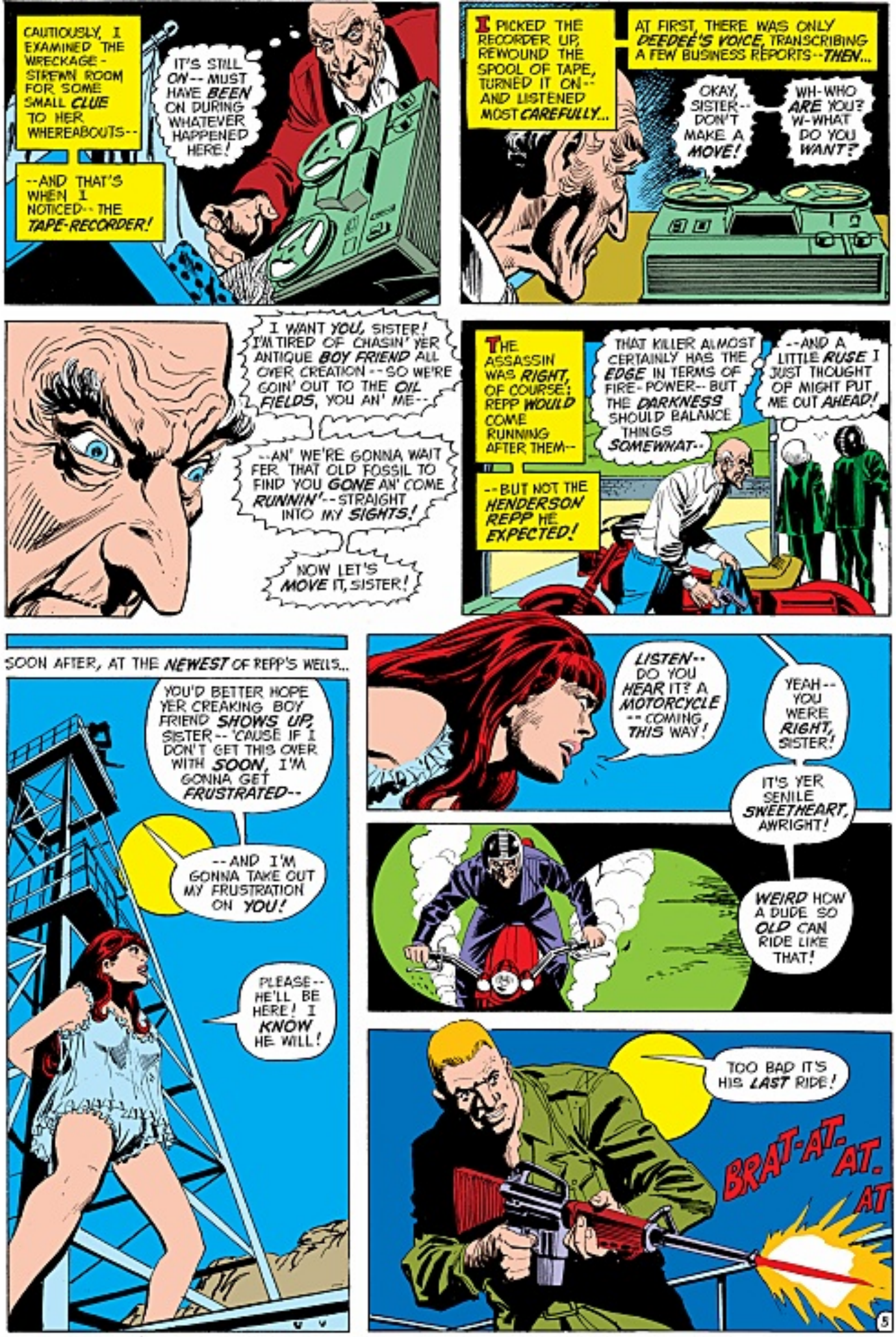
WITNESSES? OH, YOU WILL BE A WITNESS, WON'T YOU, MR. CHANCE? WE--WE OWE YOU SO MUCH--!
WELL--I SUPPOSE--I--
IT WAS A LOVELY WEDDING,
--THE HAPPY ENDING--
NEXT ISSUE ON SALE DURING THE LAST WEEK IN SEPTEMBER


HENDERSON REPP HAD MADE HIS MULTI-MILLIONS IN OKLAHOMA OIL--
--AND, UNLIKE MOST BIG MAGNATES WHO ALLOW THEIR BUSINESSES TO BE OPERATED BY OTHERS--
--HENDERSON REPP STILL TOOK CHARGE PERSONALLY!
ON ANY GIVEN DAY, IT WOULD NOT BE UNUSUAL TO SEE REPP TOOLING THROUGH HIS OIL FIELDS ON A BIG 1200 C.C. MOTORCYCLE--
--CHECKING ON PRODUCTION--CHATTING WITH HIS MEN--
IT WOULD NOT BE UNUSUAL, THAT IS-UNLESS ONE TOOK INTO CONSIDERATION HENDERSON REPP'S AGE--
--FOR, AS WELL AS BEING ONE OF THE TEN RICHEST MEN IN THE COUNTRY, REPP WAS ALSO ONE OF THE OLDEST--
--AND SOMEONE WAS TRYING TO MAKE CERTAIN REPP DIDN'T GET ANY OLDER!
I, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS TRYING TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT HE DID! THAT'S WHY REPP HAD HIRED ME...
CHRISTOPHER CHANCE...
THE HUMAN TARGET
"The MILLION-DOLLAR METHUSELAH Contract"
LEN WEIN: writer / DICK GIORDANO: artist / JULIUS SCHWARTZ: editor


I'D HEARD THE SHRILL WHINE OF THE BAZOOKA SHELL INSTANTS BEFORE IT HIT--
--AND I WAS ALREADY HURLING MYSELF FROM THE CYCLE WHEN THE GROUND ERUPTED BENEATH ME...
GOT TO ROLL WITH THE FALL-- ABSORB THE IMPACT--!
SAVE FOR AN ACHING SHOULDER, I WAS INTACT! THE CYCLE HAD TAKEN THE BRUNT OF THE BLAST--
--BUT STILL I LAY SPRAWLED IN THE DIRT LIKE ONE DEAD--
--FOR, IF THE HIDDEN SNIPER SAW ME MOVE, THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I'D BE...
THROOOMP!
"YET...THE FEEL OF SAND AGAINST MY FACE WAS NOTHING LIKE THE BRISK WIND I'D FELT ON THE DAY I'D GOTTEN INTO THIS..."
"I'D BEEN SKY-DIVING, PRACTICING FREE-FALL DEXTERITY, WHEN I'D NOTICED THE SECOND DIVER..."
WONDER WHAT HE'S DOING UP HERE?
"I COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE WRONG! THE OTHER DIVER WAS NO HE--
"--BUT THE MOST BEAUTIFUL MESSENGER I'D EVER SEEN!"
HENDERSON REPP WANTS TO SEE YOU!
"NEEDLESS TO SAY, MR. REPP HAD PIQUED MY CURIOSITY..."
"--SO I WAS NOT DISAPPOINTED TO FIND HIM WAITING FOR ME WHEN I TOUCHED GROUND..."
HENNY, HONEY, THIS GENT IS MR. CHRISTOPHER CHANCE!
YEP--YA LOOK ABOUT LIKE EVERY-THING I HEARD TELL YA WERE, CHRIS-BOY!
CHRISTOPHER, MR. REPP!
NOW...IS THERE SOMETHING I CAN DO FOR YOU?
NOTHING DIFFICULT, CHRIS-BOY-- JUST WHAT YOU'RE USUALLY PAID TO DO--
SAVE MY LIFE!
2

SAVE YOUR LIFE--FROM WHOM, MR. REPP?
FROM MY GREAT-GREAT-GREAT-GRAND-NEPHEW, NEAR AS I CAN FIGGER IT, CHRIS-BOY!
HE'S ABOUT THE ONLY ONE STANDS TO PROFIT IF I KICK THAT BITTER BUCKET!
NOT THAT I GOT ANYTHIN' AGAINST GOIN' WHEN MY TIME COMES, MIND YA--
--BUT I AIN'T GONNA LET NOBODY PUSH ME ALONG!
'SIDES, LESTER--THAT'S MY NEPHEW--AIN'T EVEN PLAYIN' FAIR--
--HE AIN'T GOT THE GUMPTION TO WASTE ME HISSELF--SO HE'S HIRED SOME MILITARY MANIAC TO DO THE JOB FOR HIM!
I FIGGER THAT GIVE ME LEAVE TO HIRE SOMEONE TOO, CHRIS-BOY!
MEANING ME, OF COURSE!
OKAY, MR. REPP, I'LL TAKE THE CONTRACT--BUT IT WILL COST YOU!
CHRIS-BOY, WITH MY KINDA MONEY, NOTHIN' COSTS YA!
NOW I'LL JUST TAKE ME A LI'L TRIP WHILE YA TAKE CARE O' BUSINESS, CHRIS-BOY--
--BUT MY--ER--SECRETARY, DEEDEE, WILL STAY WITH YA TO FILL YA IN ON ANY DETAILS YA WANNA KNOW!
THIS JOB IS GOING TO BE A PLEASURE!
"IT WAS SLIGHTLY MORE DIFFICULT THAN USUAL TO BECOME MY NEW CLIENT--"
"--SPECIAL LATEX MAKE-UP TO WRINKLE MY FACE, NECK, AND HANDS--A MULTI-STRAP HARNESS BENEATH MY CLOTHES TO CREATE THE STOOPED POSTURE OF AN OLD MAN--"
"--BUT, WHEN I HAD FINISHED, I WAS HENDERSON REPP!"
I LAY STILL LONG ENOUGH FOR THE SNIPER TO KNOW I WAS DEAD, THEN CAUTIOUSLY, I STAGGERED TO MY FEET...
THE KILLER WAS GONE--BUT I WAS NOT ALONE!
CYCLIST--COMING TOWARDS ME! COULDN'T BE THE SNIPER--HE'D HAVE FIRED BY NOW!
HOLD ON! THAT RIDER LOOKS LIKE--
3

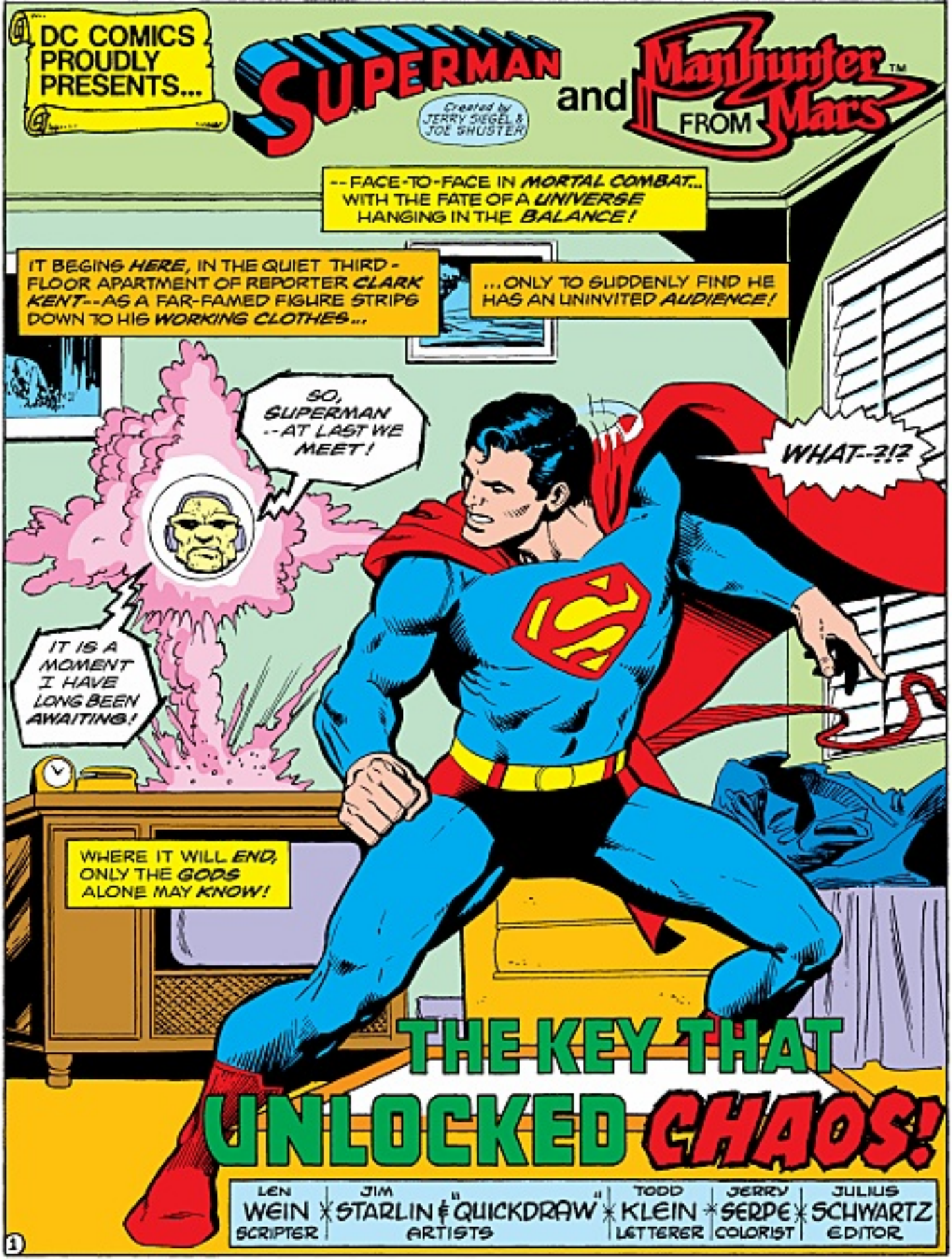

DEEDEE!?! HOW DID YOU FIND ME OUT HERE?
JUST FOLLOWED THE SMOKE, CHRISTOPHER-- FIGURED IT HAD TO BE YOU!
IF YOU'RE NOT HURT, HOP ON! WE'VE GOT SOMEPLACE TO GO!
MOMENTS LATER...
ANOTHER ONE OF "YOUR" WELLS JUST CAME IN, CHRISTOPHER--
--AND WHEN THAT HAPPENS, HENNY MAKES IT A PRACTICE ALWAYS TO COME BY--AND CONGRATULATE THE MEN!
LITTLE LADY-- YOU'RE REALLY A PRIZE!
GOOD WORK, FELLAS-- YOU'VE EARNED YOURSELVES A BONUS!
BONUS? HEY, THANKS, MR. REPP-- BUT WE WAS ONLY DOIN' OUR JOBS!
SHE'S A BEAUTY OF A WELL, MR. REPP-- SPOUTED LIKE OLD FAITHFUL!
WE PUT A TEMPORARY CAP ON HER TILL WE CAN SET HER UP PROPER TOMORROW!
THERE'S A LOT OF PRESSURE ON IT-- BUT I'M SURE THE CAP'LL HOLD!
SO AM I, SONNY--SO AM I!
THAT NIGHT, AT REPP'S SPRAWLING RANCH-HOUSE, I DECIDED TO DISCUSS FURTHER ASPECTS OF THE CASE WITH HIS SECRETARY-- BUT, SURPRISINGLY...
STRANGE-- DEEDEE DOESN'T ANSWER MY KNOCK--
--BUT I SAW HER GO INTO THIS ROOM LESS THAN AN HOUR AGO!
THAT FAMILIAR, UNCOMFORTABLE ITCHING STARTED AT THE NAPE OF MY NECK--
--AS I BURST DOWN THE BEDROOM DOOR TO FIND--
--A SHAMBLES! THERE'S BEEN SOME SORT OF STRUGGLE HERE--
--AND DEEDEE IS--GONE!
4


CAUTIOUSLY, I EXAMINED THE WRECKAGE-STREWN ROOM FOR SOME SMALL CLUE TO HER WHEREABOUTS--
IT'S STILL ON-- MUST HAVE BEEN ON DURING WHATEVER HAPPENED HERE!
--AND THAT'S WHEN I NOTICED-- THE TAPE-RECORDER!
I PICKED THE RECORDER UP, REWOUND THE SPOOL OF TAPE, TURNED IT ON-- AND LISTENED MOST CAREFULLY...
AT FIRST, THERE WAS ONLY DEEDEE'S VOICE, TRANSCRIBING A FEW BUSINESS REPORTS--THEN...
OKAY, SISTER-- DON'T MAKE A MOVE!
WH-WHO ARE YOU? W-WHAT DO YOU WANT?
I WANT YOU, SISTER! I'M TIRED OF CHASIN' YER ANTIQUE BOY FRIEND ALL OVER CREATION--SO WE'RE GOIN' OUT TO THE OIL FIELDS, YOU AN' ME--
--AN' WE'RE GONNA WAIT FER THAT OLD FOSSIL TO FIND YOU GONE AN' COME RUNNIN'--STRAIGHT INTO MY SIGHTS!
NOW LET'S MOVE IT, SISTER!
THE ASSASSIN WAS RIGHT, OF COURSE: REPP WOULD COME RUNNING AFTER THEM--
--BUT NOT THE HENDERSON REPP HE EXPECTED!
THAT KILLER ALMOST CERTAINLY HAS THE EDGE IN TERMS OF FIRE-POWER-- BUT THE DARKNESS SHOULD BALANCE THINGS SOMEWHAT--
--AND A LITTLE RUSE I JUST THOUGHT OF MIGHT PUT ME OUT AHEAD!
SOON AFTER, AT THE NEWEST OF REPP'S WELLS...
YOU'D BETTER HOPE YER CREAKING BOY FRIEND SHOWS UP, SISTER--'CAUSE IF I DON'T GET THIS OVER WITH SOON, I'M GONNA GET FRUSTRATED--
--AND I'M GONNA TAKE OUT MY FRUSTRATION ON YOU!
PLEASE-- HE'LL BE HERE! I KNOW HE WILL!
LISTEN-- DO YOU HEAR IT? A MOTORCYCLE --COMING THIS WAY!
YEAH-- YOU WERE RIGHT, SISTER!
IT'S YER SENILE SWEETHEART, AWRIGHT!
WEIRD HOW A DUDE SO OLD CAN RIDE LIKE THAT!
TOO BAD IT'S HIS LAST RIDE!
BRAT-AT-AT-AT
5

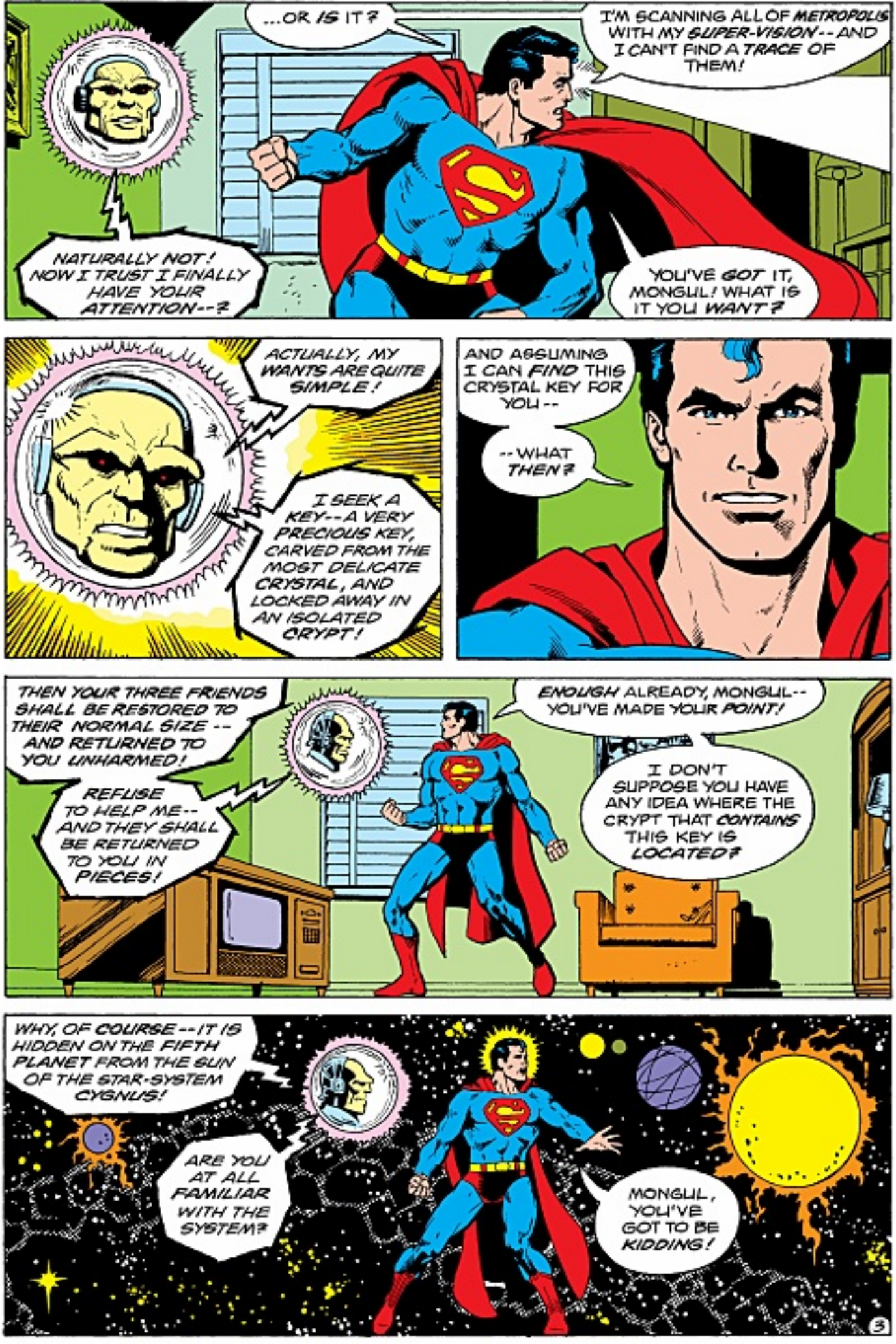
BUT TO THE WOULD-BE KILLER'S AMAZEMENT...
WHAT IN...? THAT AIN'T THE OLD MAN ON THE BIKE--
--IT'S A STRAW-STUFFED DUMMY!
SPWEEE
SPNUM!
SPWAT!
UNFORTUNATELY, THE KILLER HIMSELF WAS NOT THE DUMMY I'D HOPED HE'D BE--FOR, ALMOST INSTANTLY, HE REALIZED...
...IT'S A DIVERSIONARY ATTACK! HE'S COMIN' IN FROM A DIFFERENT--
THERE! I SEE HIM-- BUT THAT AIN'T THE OLD MAN!
NO, IT WAS ME! MY LATEX MAKE-UP HAD SERVED ITS PURPOSE--GIVING IDENTITY TO THE STRAW DUMMY I'D STRAPPED TO THE CYCLE!
FROM HERE OUT, IT WAS MY SURVIVAL SKILL THAT COUNTED, NOT MY TALENT FOR DISGUISE...
WELL, IT MAKES NO NEVERMIND WHO YOU ARE--
--YOU'LL DIE LIKE ANYONE ELSE!
HIS BURSTS WERE GETTING MUCH TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT! I HAD TIME TO FIRE JUST ONE SHOT ON THE RUN--
--BUT I ALWAYS HIT WHAT I AIM FOR!
UUNNGH-- MY GUN--?!
SPANGG
EVEN BEFORE HIS GUN HIT THE GROUND, I STARTED CLIMBING!
I WAS DEALING WITH A MANIAC--AND I HAD NO INTENTION OF GIVING HIM TIME TO RECOVER HIS SENSES--
OKAY, PUNK-- IT'S OVER! SURRENDER!
SURRENDER--?!
UNFORTUNATELY, IT TOOK HIM LESS TIME TO RECOVER THAN I'D THOUGHT...
YOU ARE GONNA DO THE SURRENDERIN', PAL--OR I'M GONNA LEAVE GO OF THIS HAND-GRENADE AN' BLOW US ALL OFF THE MAP!
YOU HEARD ME, PAL-- YOU GOT ONE SECOND TO DROP THAT 'PIECE' OR-- BOOM!
HAHAHAHA
6

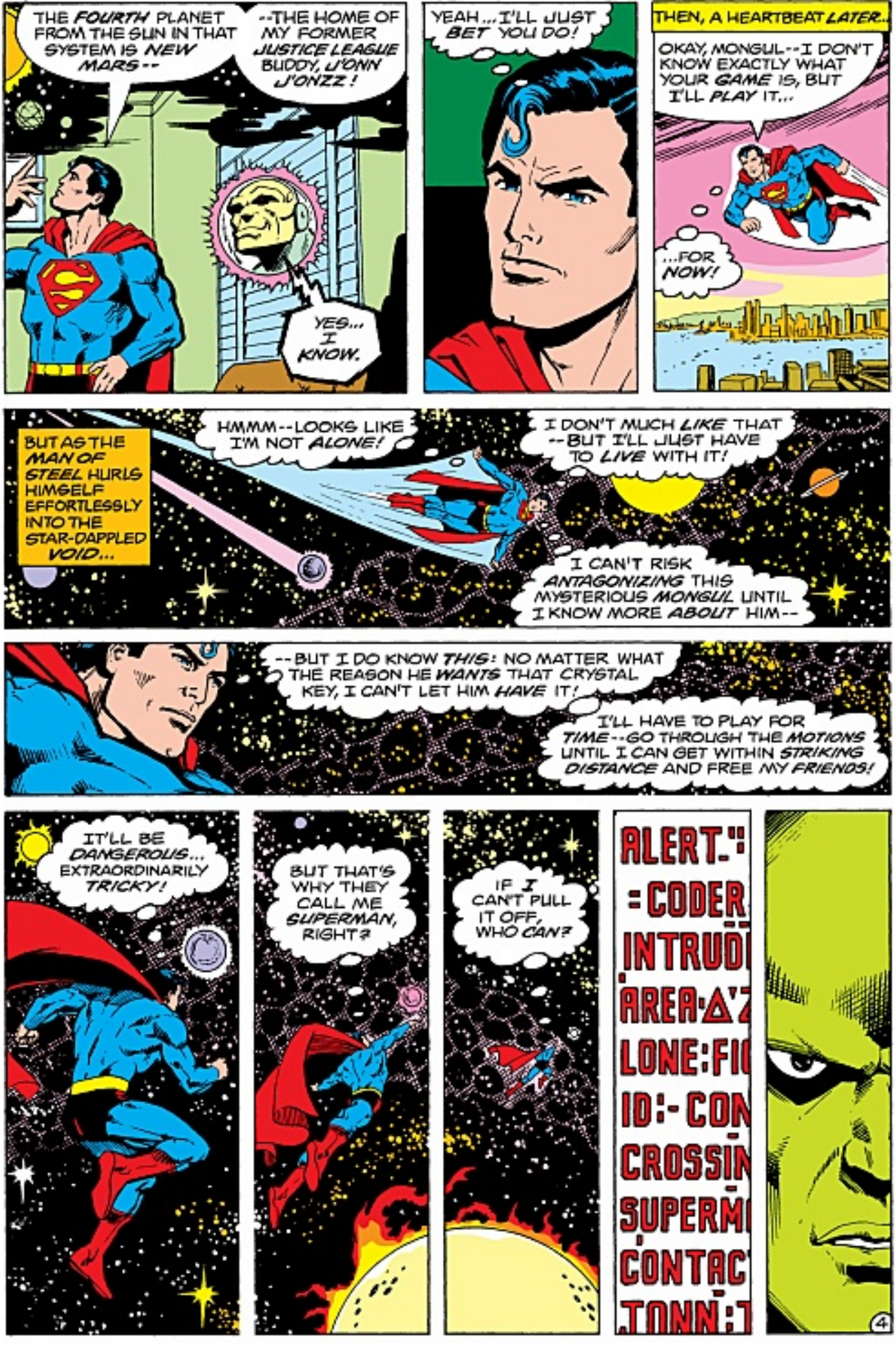
IT SEEMED I DIDN'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE...
SLOWLY, I LOWERED MY .357 MAGNUM TO MY SIDE...
--THEN PULLED THE TRIGGER!
BLAM!
A .357 MAGNUM SLUG CAN MAKE A HOLE THE SIZE OF A BASKETBALL IN A MAN! IMAGINE WHAT IT DID TO THE SEAL OF THAT WELL-CAP!
THE DRILLER HAD SAID THERE WAS A LOT OF PRESSURE ON THIS NEW WELL'S TEMPORARY CAP. I PRAYED HE WAS RIGHT!
AAAIEEEE
THE WELL-CAP SHUDDERED ONCE--TWICE--THEN, LIKE THE "OLD FAITHFUL" THAT WORKMAN HAD CALLED IT--
--IT SPEWED COUNTLESS GALLONS OF OIL--AND A MANIACAL KILLER--INTO THE SKY...
AHAROOOOSHHHH!
I HAD JUST ABOUT ENOUGH TIME TO COVER DEEDEE'S BODY WITH MINE BEFORE THE GRENADE WENT OFF, SLAMMING A WOULD-BE KILLER INTO THE OIL-SOAKED EARTH...
THWOOM!
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THE KILLER SURVIVED--AND TOLD THE POLICE ALL THEY'D NEED TO PUT REPP'S NEPHEW AWAY FOR A LONG TIME--SO--
NOBODY WILL BOTHER YOU AGAIN, MR. REPP! THERE SHOULD BE NOTHING TO KEEP YOU FROM LIVING TO A RIPE OLD AGE!
AND YA KNOW, CHRIS-BOY--THAT'S JUST WHAT I'M GONNA DO!
DEEDEE'S TALKED ME INTO TRYIN' FOR THE NEW WORLD'S RECORD FOR LONGEVITY!
I HOPE I LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO SEE IF HE MAKES IT!
THE END

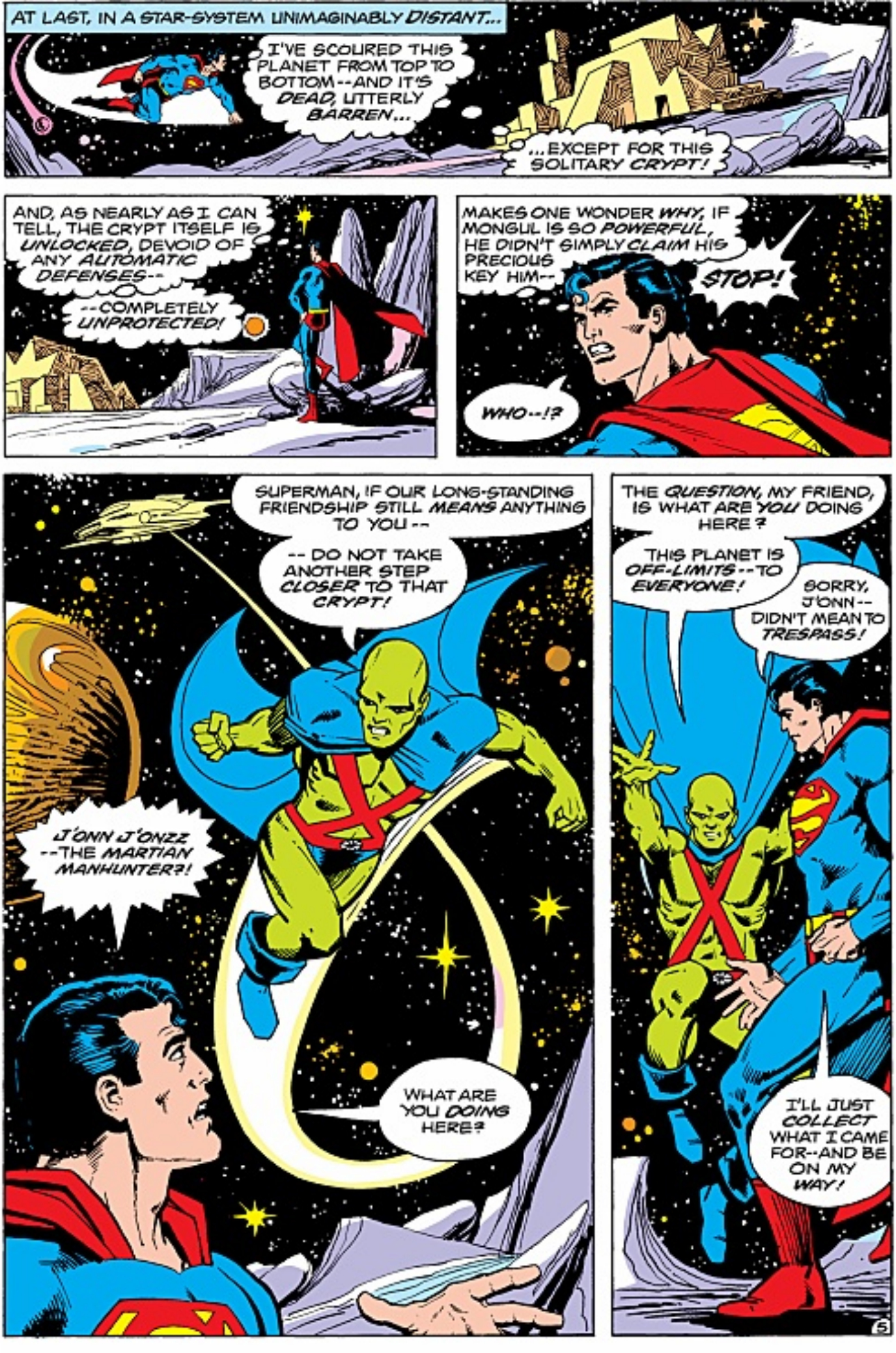
Cover for **DC COMICS PRESENTS #27** (1980)
Art by Jim Starlin


DC COMICS PROUDLY PRESENTS...
SUPERMAN
Created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER
and
Manhunter FROM Mars
-- FACE-TO-FACE IN MORTAL COMBAT... WITH THE FATE OF A UNIVERSE HANGING IN THE BALANCE!
IT BEGINS HERE, IN THE QUIET THIRD-FLOOR APARTMENT OF REPORTER CLARK KENT--AS A FAR-FAMED FIGURE STRIPS DOWN TO HIS WORKING CLOTHES...
...ONLY TO SUDDENLY FIND HE HAS AN UNINVITED AUDIENCE!
SO, SUPERMAN --AT LAST WE MEET!
WHAT--?!?
IT IS A MOMENT I HAVE LONG BEEN AWAITING!
WHERE IT WILL END, ONLY THE GODS ALONE MAY KNOW!
THE KEY THAT UNLOCKED CHAOS!
LEN WEIN SCRIPTER
JIM STARLIN & "QUICKDRAW" ARTISTS
TODD KLEIN LETTERER
JERRY SERPE COLORIST
JULIUS SCHWARTZ EDITOR
1

FUNNY, I DON'T RECALL HEARING ANYONE KNOCK!
JUST WHO ARE YOU, MISTER? HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE?
I AM CALLED MONGUL--
--AND YOUR POOR ATTEMPTS AT FLIPPANCY ARE WASTED ON ME!
I AM ACUTELY AWARE OF YOUR VAUNTED SUPER-POWERS, KRYPTONIAN--
--THUS I AM TRANSMITTING THIS MESSAGE TO YOU FROM THE SAFETY OF MY SHIP VIA SCRAMBLED SIGNAL--
--A SIGNAL EVEN YOU CANNOT POSSIBLY HOPE TO TRACE!
I HAVE COME TO YOU, SUPERMAN, BECAUSE I HAVE NEED OF YOU--
--TO RETRIEVE AN ITEM WHICH BY RIGHTS BELONGS TO ME!
SORRY, CHUM--BUT YOU SAID IT YOURSELF!
I'M SUPERMAN --NOT SOME ERRAND BOY!
I AM AFRAID YOU DON'T PRECISELY UNDERSTAND!
I AM NOT ASKING YOU--I AM ORDERING YOU!
YOU WILL DO AS I COMMAND --OR MY THREE DIMINUTIVE "GUESTS" WILL SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES!
I DO TRUST YOU RECOGNIZE THEM--?
GREAT KRYPTON! IT'S STEVE LOMBARD...JIMMY OLSEN... AND LOIS LANE!
BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!...
2


...OR IS IT?
I'M SCANNING ALL OF METROPOLIS WITH MY SUPER-VISION -- AND I CAN'T FIND A TRACE OF THEM!
NATURALLY NOT! NOW I TRUST I FINALLY HAVE YOUR ATTENTION--?
YOU'VE GOT IT, MONGUL! WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?
ACTUALLY, MY WANTS ARE QUITE SIMPLE!
I SEEK A KEY--A VERY PRECIOUS KEY, CARVED FROM THE MOST DELICATE CRYSTAL, AND LOCKED AWAY IN AN ISOLATED CRYPT!
AND ASSUMING I CAN FIND THIS CRYSTAL KEY FOR YOU --
--WHAT THEN?
THEN YOUR THREE FRIENDS SHALL BE RESTORED TO THEIR NORMAL SIZE -- AND RETURNED TO YOU UNHARMED!
REFUSE TO HELP ME-- AND THEY SHALL BE RETURNED TO YOU IN PIECES!
ENOUGH ALREADY, MONGUL-- YOU'VE MADE YOUR POINT!
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHERE THE CRYPT THAT CONTAINS THIS KEY IS LOCATED?
WHY, OF COURSE--IT IS HIDDEN ON THE FIFTH PLANET FROM THE SUN OF THE STAR-SYSTEM CYGNUS!
ARE YOU AT ALL FAMILIAR WITH THE SYSTEM?
MONGUL, YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!
3


THE FOURTH PLANET FROM THE SUN IN THAT SYSTEM IS NEW MARS--
--THE HOME OF MY FORMER JUSTICE LEAGUE BUDDY, J'ONN J'ONZZ!
YES... I KNOW.
YEAH... I'LL JUST BET YOU DO!
THEN, A HEARTBEAT LATER...
OKAY, MONGUL--I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOUR GAME IS, BUT I'LL PLAY IT...
...FOR NOW!
BUT AS THE MAN OF STEEL HURLS HIMSELF EFFORTLESSLY INTO THE STAR-DAPPLED VOID...
HMMM--LOOKS LIKE I'M NOT ALONE!
I DON'T MUCH LIKE THAT --BUT I'LL JUST HAVE TO LIVE WITH IT!
I CAN'T RISK ANTAGONIZING THIS MYSTERIOUS MONGUL UNTIL I KNOW MORE ABOUT HIM--
--BUT I DO KNOW THIS: NO MATTER WHAT THE REASON HE WANTS THAT CRYSTAL KEY, I CAN'T LET HIM HAVE IT!
I'LL HAVE TO PLAY FOR TIME--GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS UNTIL I CAN GET WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE AND FREE MY FRIENDS!
IT'LL BE DANGEROUS... EXTRAORDINARILY TRICKY!
BUT THAT'S WHY THEY CALL ME SUPERMAN, RIGHT?
IF I CAN'T PULL IT OFF, WHO CAN?
ALERT-::
=CODER
INTRUD
AREA:Δ'Z
LONE:FIC
ID:-CON
CROSSIN
SUPERM
CONTAC
JONN:J
4


AT LAST, IN A STAR-SYSTEM UNIMAGINABLY DISTANT...
I'VE SCOURED THIS PLANET FROM TOP TO BOTTOM--AND IT'S DEAD, UTTERLY BARREN...
...EXCEPT FOR THIS SOLITARY CRYPT!
AND, AS NEARLY AS I CAN TELL, THE CRYPT ITSELF IS UNLOCKED, DEVOID OF ANY AUTOMATIC DEFENSES--
--COMPLETELY UNPROTECTED!
MAKES ONE WONDER WHY, IF MONGUL IS SO POWERFUL, HE DIDN'T SIMPLY CLAIM HIS PRECIOUS KEY HIM--
STOP!
WHO--!?
SUPERMAN, IF OUR LONG-STANDING FRIENDSHIP STILL MEANS ANYTHING TO YOU--
-- DO NOT TAKE ANOTHER STEP CLOSER TO THAT CRYPT!
J'ONN J'ONZZ --THE MARTIAN MANHUNTER?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
THE QUESTION, MY FRIEND, IS WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
THIS PLANET IS OFF-LIMITS--TO EVERYONE!
SORRY, J'ONN-- DIDN'T MEAN TO TRESPASS!
I'LL JUST COLLECT WHAT I CAME FOR--AND BE ON MY WAY!
5

YOU DON'T MEAN THE KEY--?!
WHAT ELSE?! THE LIVES OF MY FRIENDS DEPEND ON MY GETTING IT!
AND THE LIVES OF WORLDS BEYOND NUMBERING DEPEND ON IT REMAINING HERE!
I WAS AFRAID OF THAT!
LOOK, J'ONN--MAYBE YOU'D BETTER TELL ME EXACTLY WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!
GLADLY, MY FRIEND--IF IT WILL BRING YOU TO YOUR SENSES!
"CENTURIES AGO, THERE EXISTED A RACE OF BEINGS CALLED THE WARZOON--
"--A RACE TO WHOM CONQUEST WAS AS MUCH A PART OF LIFE AS BREATHING!
"IN THEIR TIME, THE WARZOON CARVED A PATH OF DEATH AND DESTRUCTION ACROSS HALF THE KNOWN UNIVERSE--
"--BUT THAT WAS NOT ENOUGH; THEY WANTED MORE!
"TO FACILITATE THEIR DREAM, THE WARZOON DEVOTED ALL THEIR EFFORTS TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SPECIAL SATELLITE--
"--A SATELLITE THAT WOULD ULTIMATELY MAKE THEM MASTERS OF THE COSMOS!
"NUCLEAR MISSILES SEVERAL MILES HIGH DOTTED THE SATELLITE'S SURFACE, FLANKED BY MACRO-LASER CANNONS CAPABLE OF INCINERATING ENTIRE WORLDS...

"MONSTROUS *ENGINES* MADE THE SATELLITE *MOBILE*, ALLOWING IT TO TRAVERSE SPACE AT INCALCULABLE *SPEEDS*...

"THEY CALLED THIS SATELLITE --*WARWORLD!*

"BUT BEFORE THEY COULD PUT THEIR CREATION TO ITS INTENDED *USE*--

"--THE ENTIRE WARZOON RACE MYSTERIOUSLY... *DIED!*

"THE *LARGAS*--A RACE THAT WAS THE VERY *ANTITHESIS* OF THE BLOOD-THIRSTY WARZOON --FOUND THE LAST OF THE WARZOON *WAR-CHIEFS* SLUMPED DEAD AT THE SATELLITE'S *CONTROLS*...

"UNFORTUNATELY, THE ULTRA-PEACEFUL LARGAS COULD NOT BRING THEMSELVES TO *DESTROY* WARWORLD, DESPITE THE OVERWHELMING *THREAT* IT POSED--

"--SO THEY DID THE *NEXT* BEST THING...

"THEY REPROGRAMMED THE SATELLITE'S *DEFENSES* TO PREVENT ANYONE FROM SETTING *FOOT* ON WARWORLD EVER AGAIN...

"ONLY THE SONIC VIBRATIONS OF A CERTAIN *CRYSTAL KEY* WOULD ALLOW ANYONE TO *PENETRATE* WARWORLD'S PROTECTIVE SCREEN--

"--AND THUS, THEY HELD THE KEY IN *SAFEKEEPING!*

"PERHAPS THE LARGAS PRESERVED WARWORLD AS A LAST-RESORT *DOOMSDAY WEAPON* WHICH MIGHT SOMEDAY BE NEEDED TO SAVE THE *UNIVERSE*...

"...PERHAPS *NOT.*

"REGRETTABLY, WE WILL NEVER *KNOW.*

"FOR THE LARGAS WERE AN ANCIENT, *DYING* RACE, AND THE CENTURIES PASSED *SWIFTLY*--

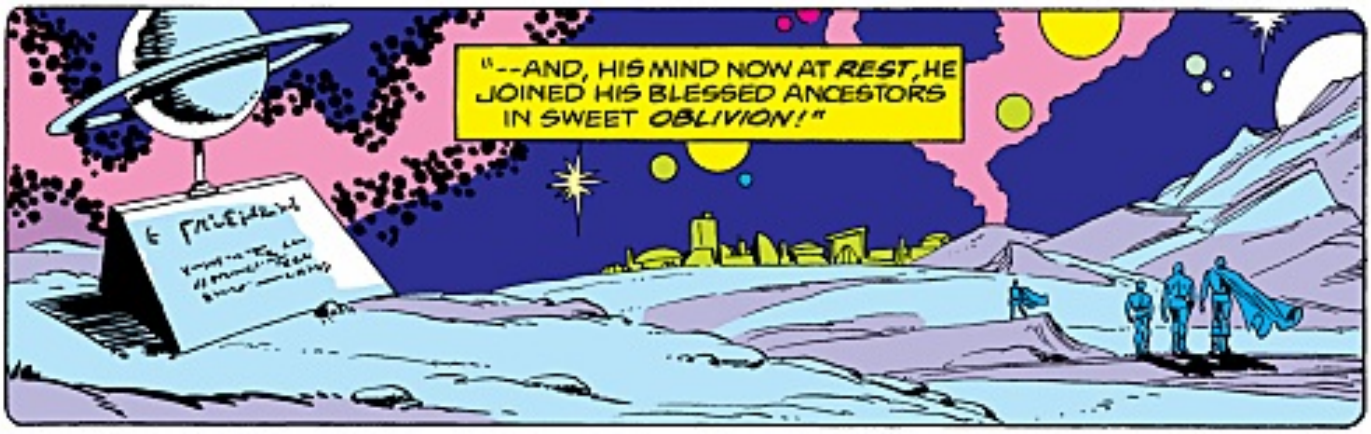
"--UNTIL, AT LAST, ONLY *ONE* OF THE LARGAS *REMAINED!*

"KNOWING HIS TIME WAS GROWING DESPERATELY *SHORT*, THE LAST LARGA SEARCHED THROUGH ALL THE GALAXIES FOR A RACE TO *CARRY ON* HIS SACRED MISSION--

"--AND FOUND *US!*

7

"THE LARGA SAW HOW WAR HAD DEVASTATED THE ORIGINAL MARS -- AND KNEW THAT WE WHO HAD SURVIVED THAT DEVASTATION NOW PRIZED PEACE OVER ALL OTHER THINGS...
"THUS, HE GAVE THE CRYSTAL KEY INTO OUR KEEPING--MADE US VOW TO PROTECT IT WITH ALL THE POWER AT OUR COMMAND--


"--AND, HIS MIND NOW AT REST, HE JOINED HIS BLESSED ANCESTORS IN SWEET OBLIVION!"

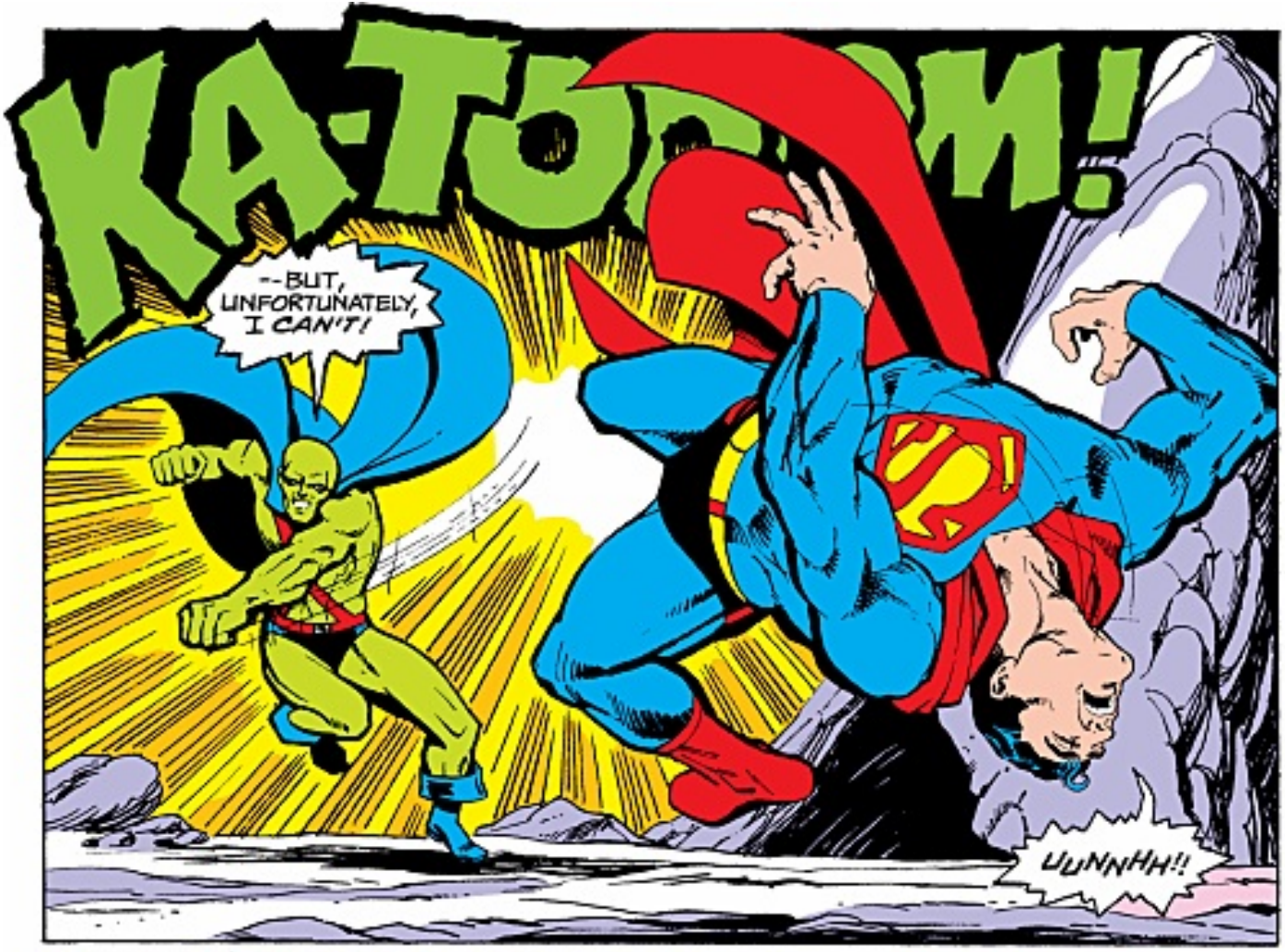
NOW DO YOU SEE WHY YOU CANNOT HAVE THAT KEY, MY FRIEND?
IT IS PERHAPS THE SINGLE MOST DANGEROUS OBJECT IN THE UNIVERSE--
-- AND I AM SWORN TO PROTECT IT!

I UNDERSTAND YOUR POSITION, J'ONN AND I SYMPATHIZE!
BUT DON'T FORGET WHOM YOU'RE TALKING TO HERE!

I'M SUPERMAN, REMEMBER?

SO WHY DON'T YOU JUST STEP ASIDE--AND LET ME HANDLE THIS?
BELIEVE ME--I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING!

I REALLY WISH I COULD BELIEVE YOU, MY BRASH KRYPTONIAN FRIEND--
8


KA-TOOM!
--BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, I CAN'T!
UUNNHH!!

I GAVE YOU FAIR WARNING, SUPERMAN--
KA-DOOM!
--A GOOD DEAL MORE WARNING THAN I WOULD HAVE GIVEN ANYONE ELSE!
I DID SO BECAUSE YOU WERE MY FRIEND--
--BUT THE BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP CAN ONLY BE STRETCHED SO FAR BEFORE THEY BREAK!
9

GO I SEE!
UUNNFF!!

NOW, PLEASE, J'ONN-- GIVE IT UP! YOU KNOW YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR ME!
PERHAPS NOT--

--BUT THERE IS MORE THAN ONE WAY TO SKIN A CAT, AS THE OLD EARTH SAYING GOES!
YOUR APPROACH WAS MONITORED LONG BEFORE YOU EVER REACHED THIS PLANET --
--AND CERTAIN PRECAUTIONS WERE TAKEN!

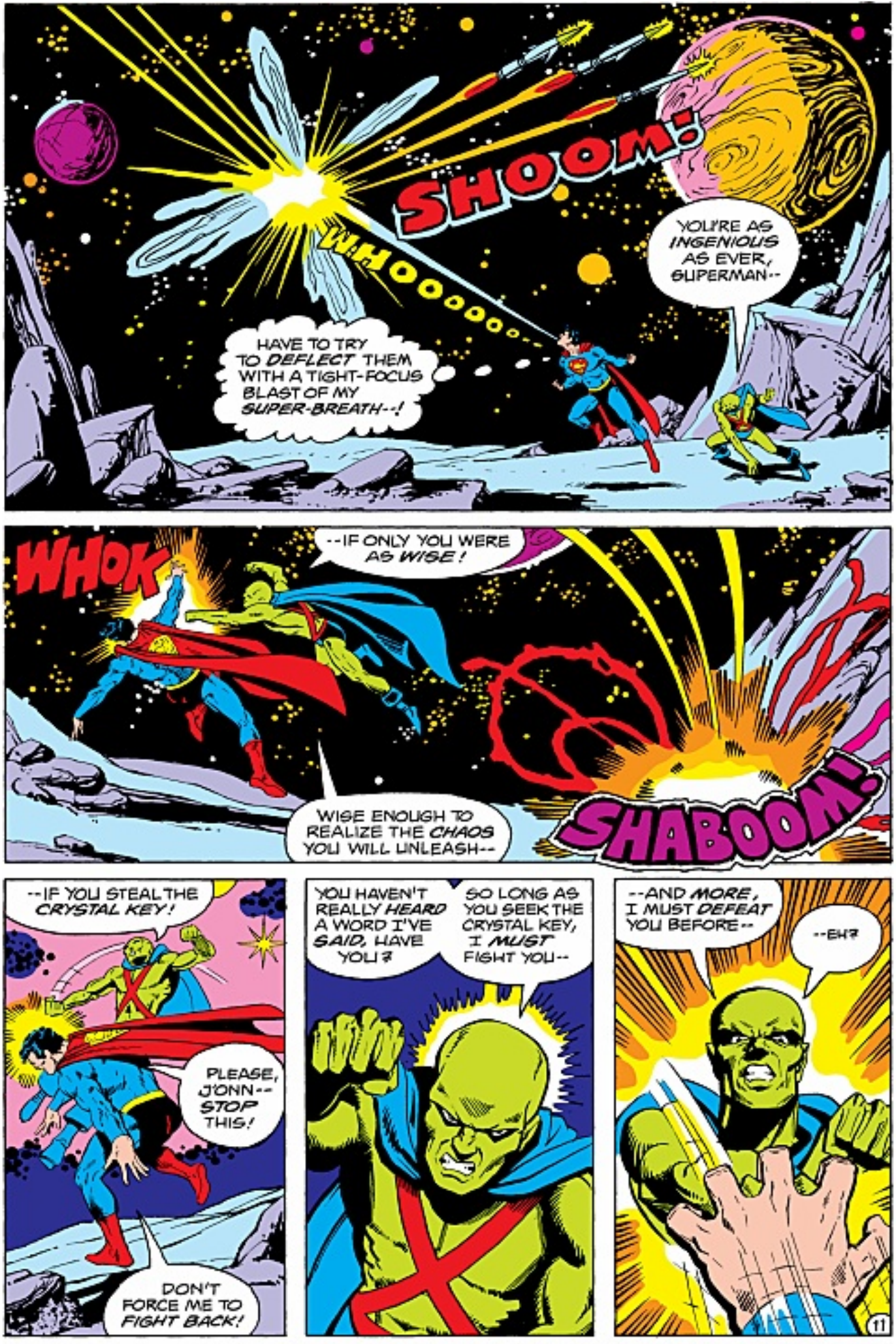
BUT I REGRET WITH ALL MY HEART THAT YOU'VE FORCED ME TO USE THEM!
KLIK!

MINIATURE MISSILES?!
J'ONN, YOU DON'T HONESTLY EXPECT THESE TOYS TO STOP ME--?!?
OH, BUT I DO!

HOW COULD J'ONN POSSIBLY HOPE TO-- HUH?
THE WARHEADS ON THOSE MISSILES-- THEY'RE GLOWING--!
--GLOWING GREEN!

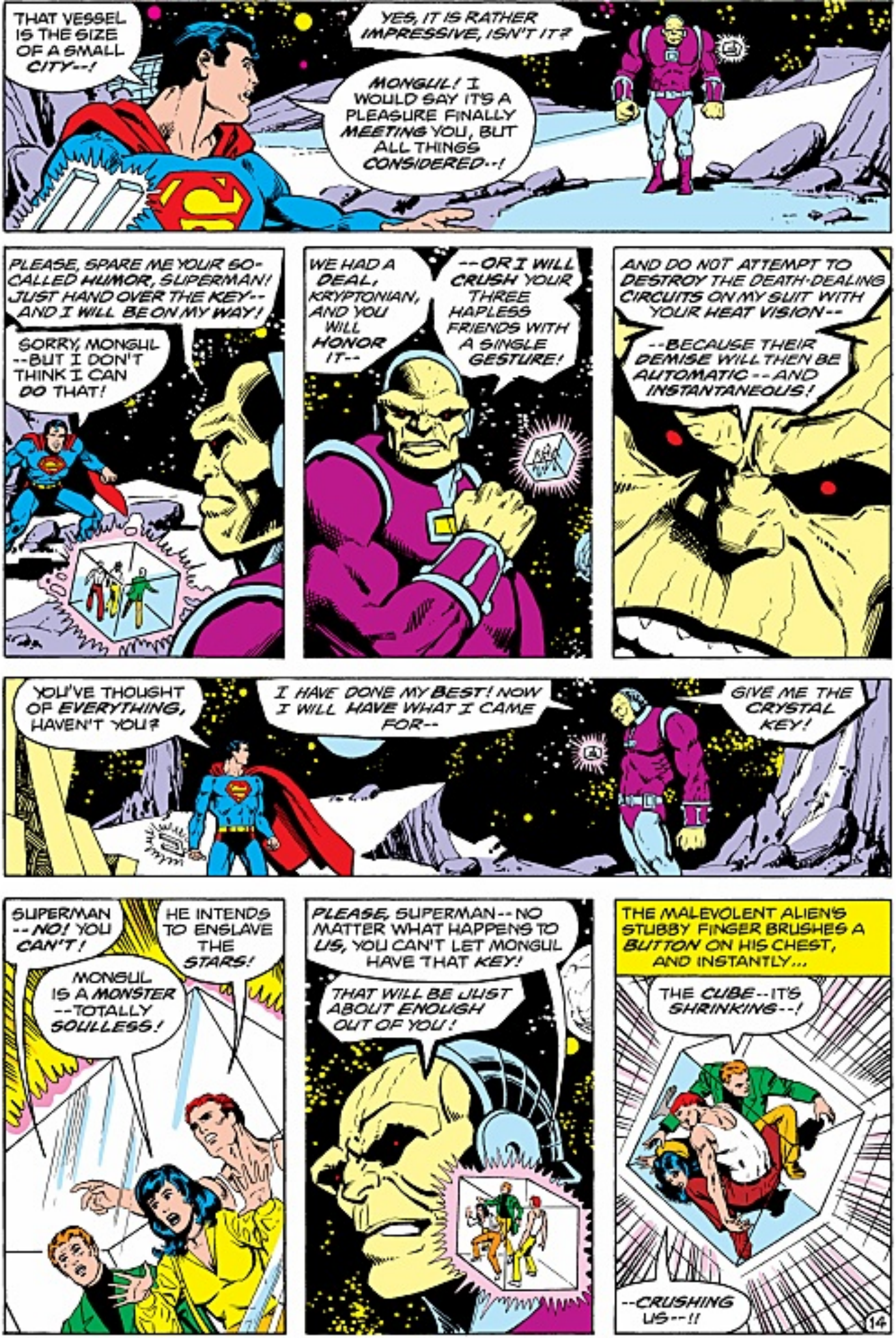
"GREAT GALAXIES! THOSE THINGS ARE ARMED WITH KRYPTONITE --THE ONE SUBSTANCE I'M POWERLESS AGAINST!"

CAN'T LET THOSE ROCKETS GET CLOSE TO ME--!
ONLY ONE CHANCE--!
10

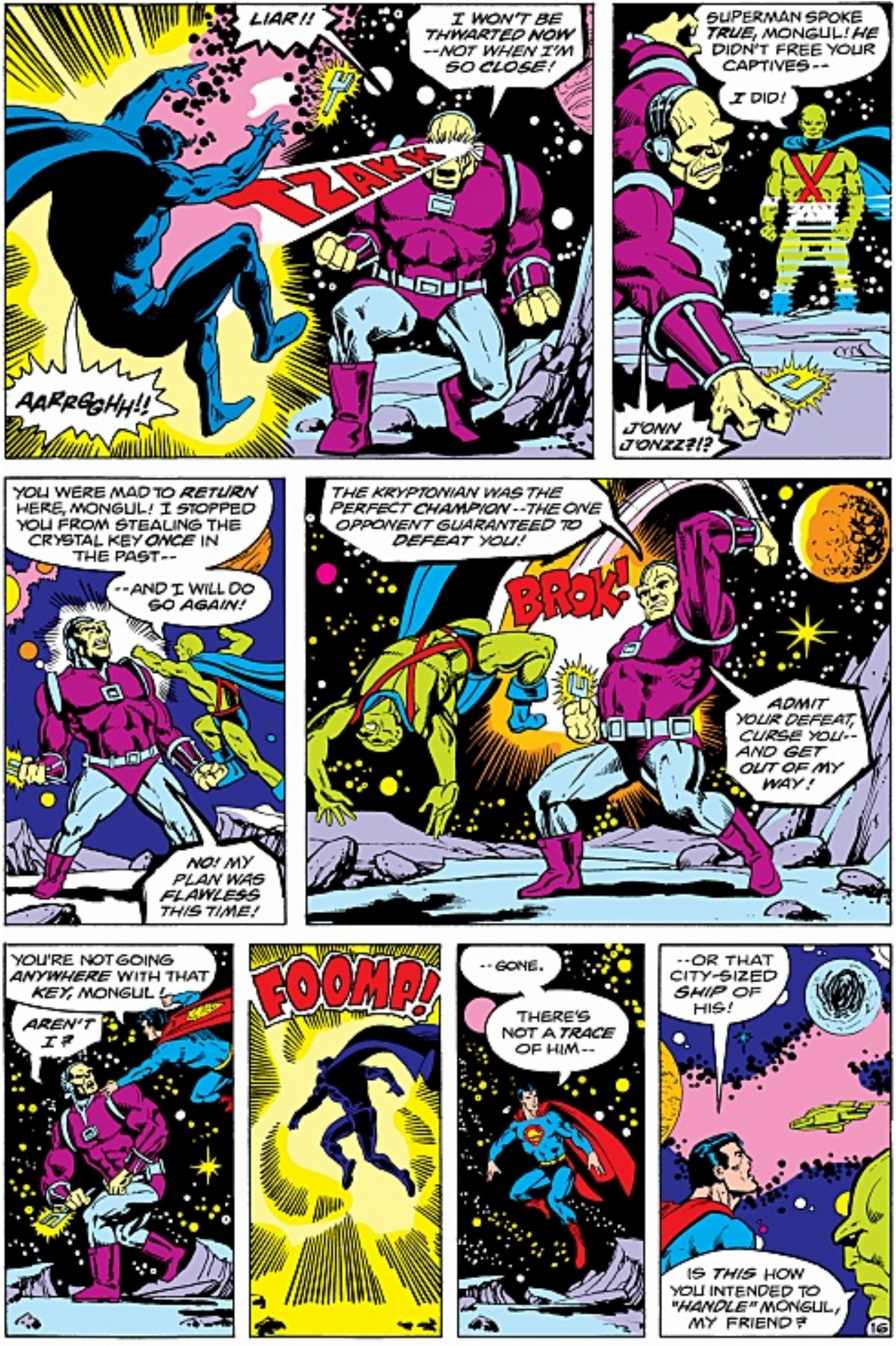

SHOOM!
WHOOOOOO...
YOU'RE AS INGENIOUS AS EVER, SUPERMAN--
HAVE TO TRY TO DEFLECT THEM WITH A TIGHT-FOCUS BLAST OF MY SUPER-BREATH--!
WHOK
--IF ONLY YOU WERE AS WISE!
WISE ENOUGH TO REALIZE THE CHAOS YOU WILL UNLEASH--
SHABOOM!
--IF YOU STEAL THE CRYSTAL KEY!
PLEASE, J'ONN-- STOP THIS!
DON'T FORCE ME TO FIGHT BACK!
YOU HAVEN'T REALLY HEARD A WORD I'VE SAID, HAVE YOU?
SO LONG AS YOU SEEK THE CRYSTAL KEY, I MUST FIGHT YOU--
--AND MORE, I MUST DEFEAT YOU BEFORE--
--EH?
11

I MEANT IT, J'ONN--I CAN'T LET YOU STOP ME--
--NOT WITH THE LIVES OF MY FRIENDS AT STAKE!
UUNNHH!!
MY HEAT VISION WILL IGNITE THE CARBON-LADEN GROUND AROUND US, CREATING A RING OF FIRE--
--THE GREATEST WEAKNESS OF ALL MARTIANS!
N-NO... CAN'T SUCCUMB ...CAN'T SURRENDER..
LISTEN TO HIM! THE MAN'S A HERO IN THE TRUEST SENSE OF THE WORD--
--WHICH JUST MAKES ME REGRET HAVING TO DO THIS ALL THE MORE!
AARRGGHH!!
KRUNNCH!
I'M SORRY ABOUT THIS, J'ONN-- YOU'LL NEVER REALLY KNOW HOW SORRY!
NOW PLEASE-- FOR BOTH OUR SAKES-- JUST LIE THERE TILL I'M GONE!
12

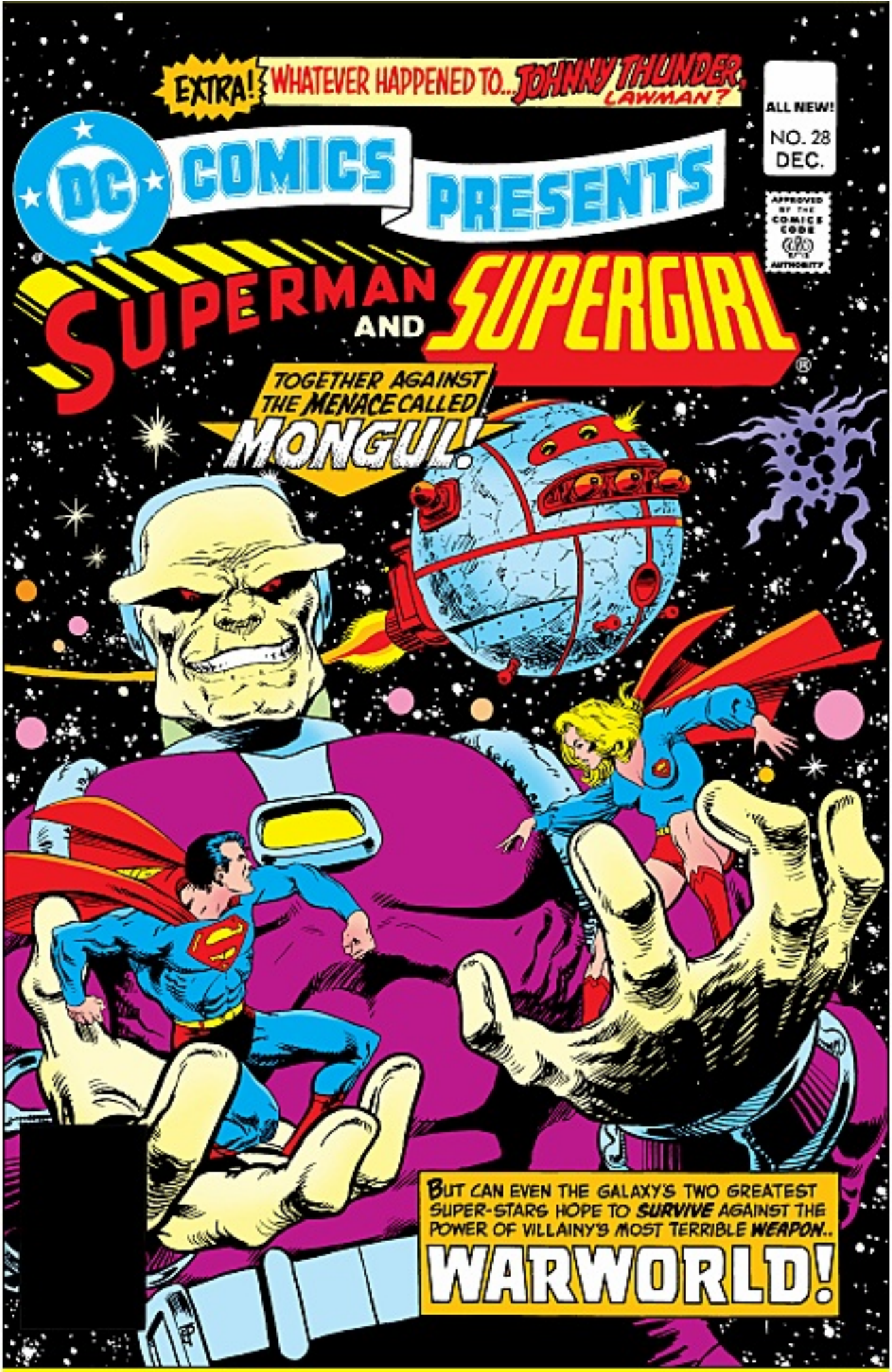
SLOWLY, SILENTLY, WITHOUT ANOTHER GLANCE AT THE FALLEN MARTIAN MANHUNTER, THE MAN OF STEEL STRIDES TO THE ENORMOUS CRYPT--
--HIS THOUGHTS ECHOING WITH HIS FOOTFALLS THROUGH THE DUST-CAKED DARKNESS...
ALL THAT PAIN...ALL THAT ANGUISH...FOR THIS?!?
IT WOULD BE FUNNY--IF IT WEREN'T SO SAD!
LOOK AT THIS THING... SO SMALL... SO FRAGILE...
WILL I REALLY BE ABLE TO PROTECT THIS KEY AS I PLANNED--?
IT WON'T BE EASY ...BUT THAT'S WHY THEY CALL ME --
--SUPERMAN?!?
GREAT SCOTT!
13


THAT VESSEL IS THE SIZE OF A SMALL CITY--!
YES, IT IS RATHER IMPRESSIVE, ISN'T IT?
MONGUL! I WOULD SAY IT'S A PLEASURE FINALLY MEETING YOU, BUT ALL THINGS CONSIDERED--!
PLEASE, SPARE ME YOUR SO-CALLED HUMOR, SUPERMAN! JUST HAND OVER THE KEY-- AND I WILL BE ON MY WAY!
SORRY, MONGUL --BUT I DON'T THINK I CAN DO THAT!
WE HAD A DEAL, KRYPTONIAN, AND YOU WILL HONOR IT--
--OR I WILL CRUSH YOUR THREE HAPLESS FRIENDS WITH A SINGLE GESTURE!
AND DO NOT ATTEMPT TO DESTROY THE DEATH-DEALING CIRCUITS ON MY SUIT WITH YOUR HEAT VISION--
--BECAUSE THEIR DEMISE WILL THEN BE AUTOMATIC--AND INSTANTANEOUS!
YOU'VE THOUGHT OF EVERYTHING, HAVEN'T YOU?
I HAVE DONE MY BEST! NOW I WILL HAVE WHAT I CAME FOR--
GIVE ME THE CRYSTAL KEY!
SUPERMAN --NO! YOU CAN'T!
HE INTENDS TO ENSLAVE THE STARS!
MONGUL IS A MONSTER --TOTALLY SOULLESS!
PLEASE, SUPERMAN--NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO US, YOU CAN'T LET MONGUL HAVE THAT KEY!
THAT WILL BE JUST ABOUT ENOUGH OUT OF YOU!
THE MALEVOLENT ALIEN'S STUBBY FINGER BRUSHES A BUTTON ON HIS CHEST, AND INSTANTLY...
THE CUBE--IT'S SHRINKING--!
--CRUSHING US--!!
14

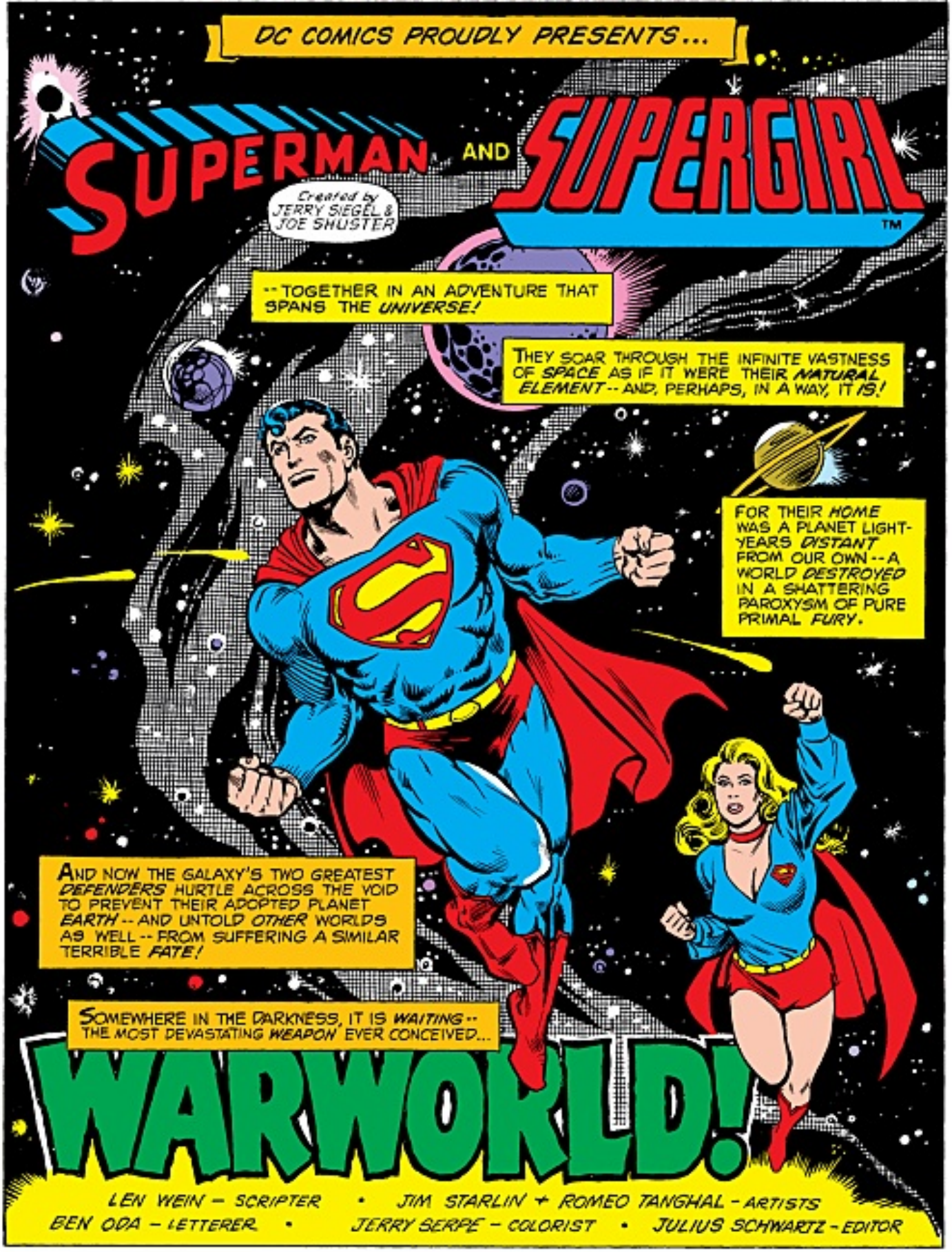
LOIS... JIMMY... STEVE...
I WILL ASK YOU THIS FOR THE LAST TIME, KRYPTONIAN--
--GIVE ME THE KEY!
SUPERMAN--DON'T! IF WE MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU--
--LET US DIE TO SAVE THE UNIVERSE!
I AM WAITING, SUPERMAN!
THEN YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL DOOMSDAY!
MY FRIENDS ARE RIGHT, MONGUL --I CAN'T LET YOU HAVE THIS KEY!
WHAT--?!
LOIS...JIMMY... STEVE... FORGIVE ME!
THEY WON'T HAVE THE TIME, FOOL! IN ANOTHER INSTANT, THEY'LL BE--
SPING!
--EH? MY CUBE-CONTROLS-- SHATTERING--?!?
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DID IT, DARLING--
--BUT THANKS!
CURSE YOU, KRYPTONIAN-- YOU'VE FREED THEM!
BUT I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT--!
15


LIAR!!
I WON'T BE THWARTED NOW --NOT WHEN I'M SO CLOSE!
TZAKK
AARRGGHH!!
SUPERMAN SPOKE TRUE, MONGUL! HE DIDN'T FREE YOUR CAPTIVES--
I DID!
J'ONN J'ONZZ?!?
YOU WERE MAD TO RETURN HERE, MONGUL! I STOPPED YOU FROM STEALING THE CRYSTAL KEY ONCE IN THE PAST--
--AND I WILL DO SO AGAIN!
NO! MY PLAN WAS FLAWLESS THIS TIME!
THE KRYPTONIAN WAS THE PERFECT CHAMPION--THE ONE OPPONENT GUARANTEED TO DEFEAT YOU!
BROK!
ADMIT YOUR DEFEAT, CURSE YOU-- AND GET OUT OF MY WAY!
YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE WITH THAT KEY, MONGUL!
AREN'T I?
FOOMP!
--GONE.
THERE'S NOT A TRACE OF HIM--
--OR THAT CITY-SIZED SHIP OF HIS!
IS THIS HOW YOU INTENDED TO "HANDLE" MONGUL, MY FRIEND?
16

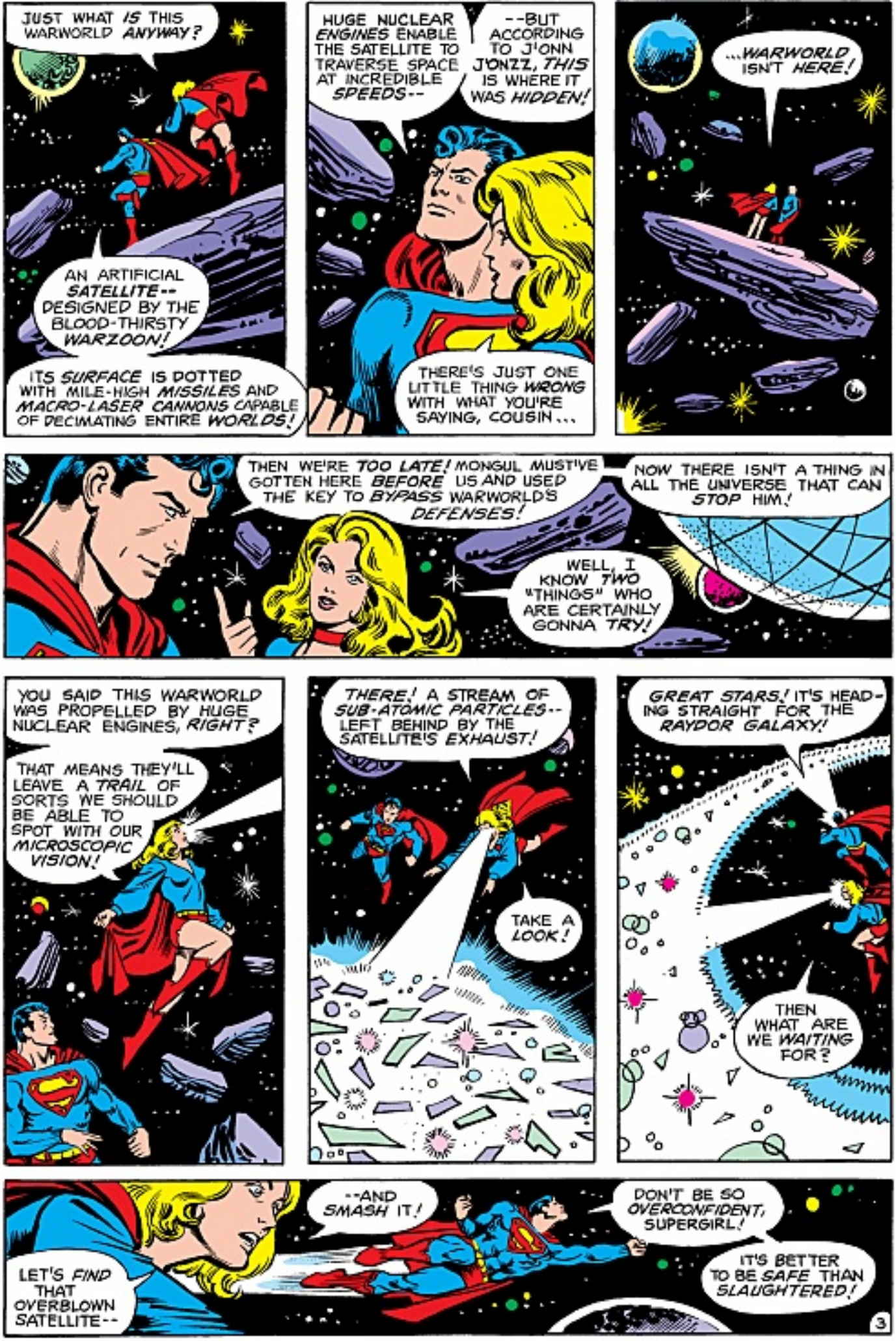
NEXT ISSUE: THE TEAM-UP YOU DEMANDED -- THE MAN OF STEEL AND SUPERGIRL -- ALONE AGAINST THE MENACE OF ... "WARWORLD!"

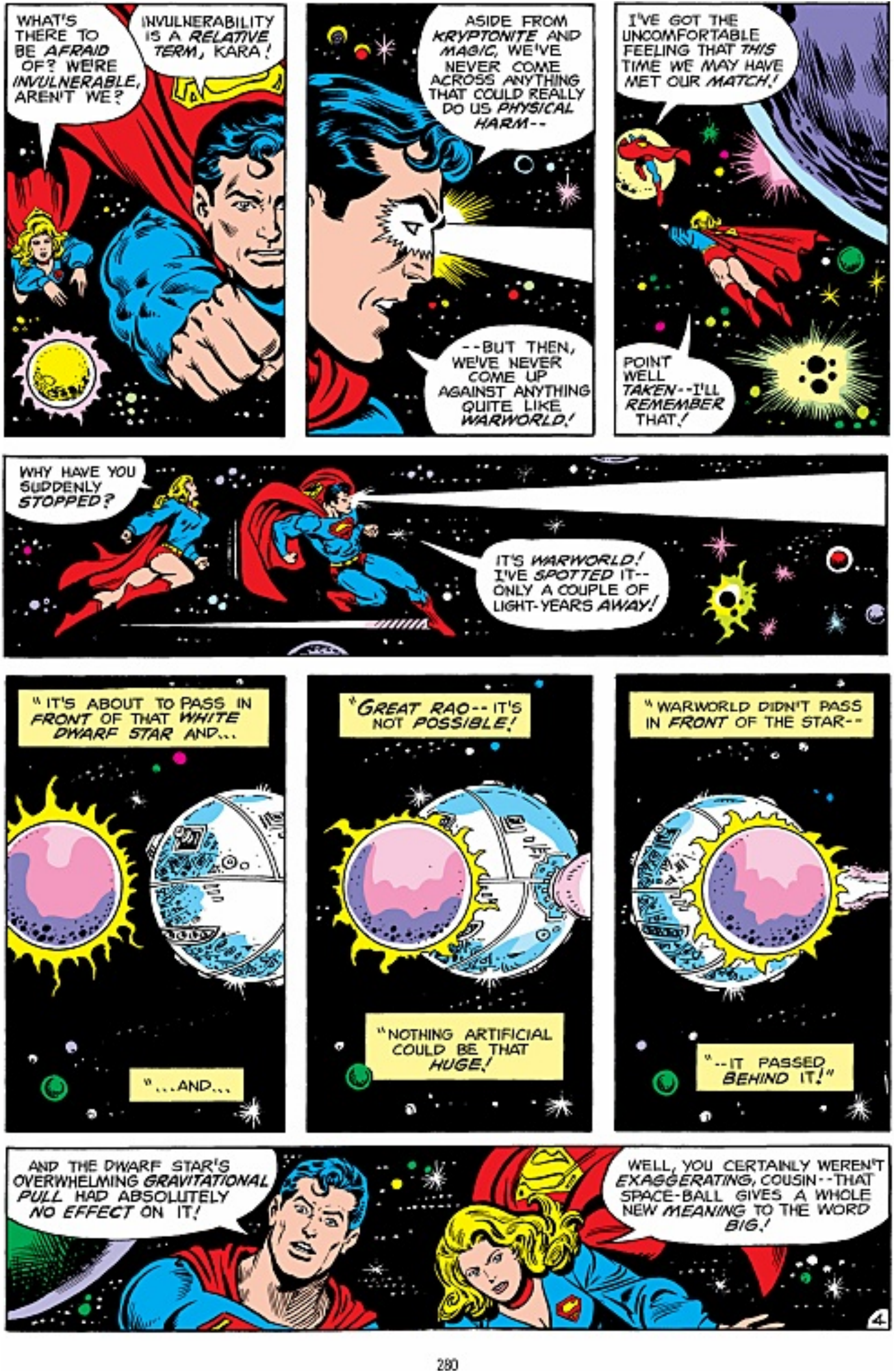


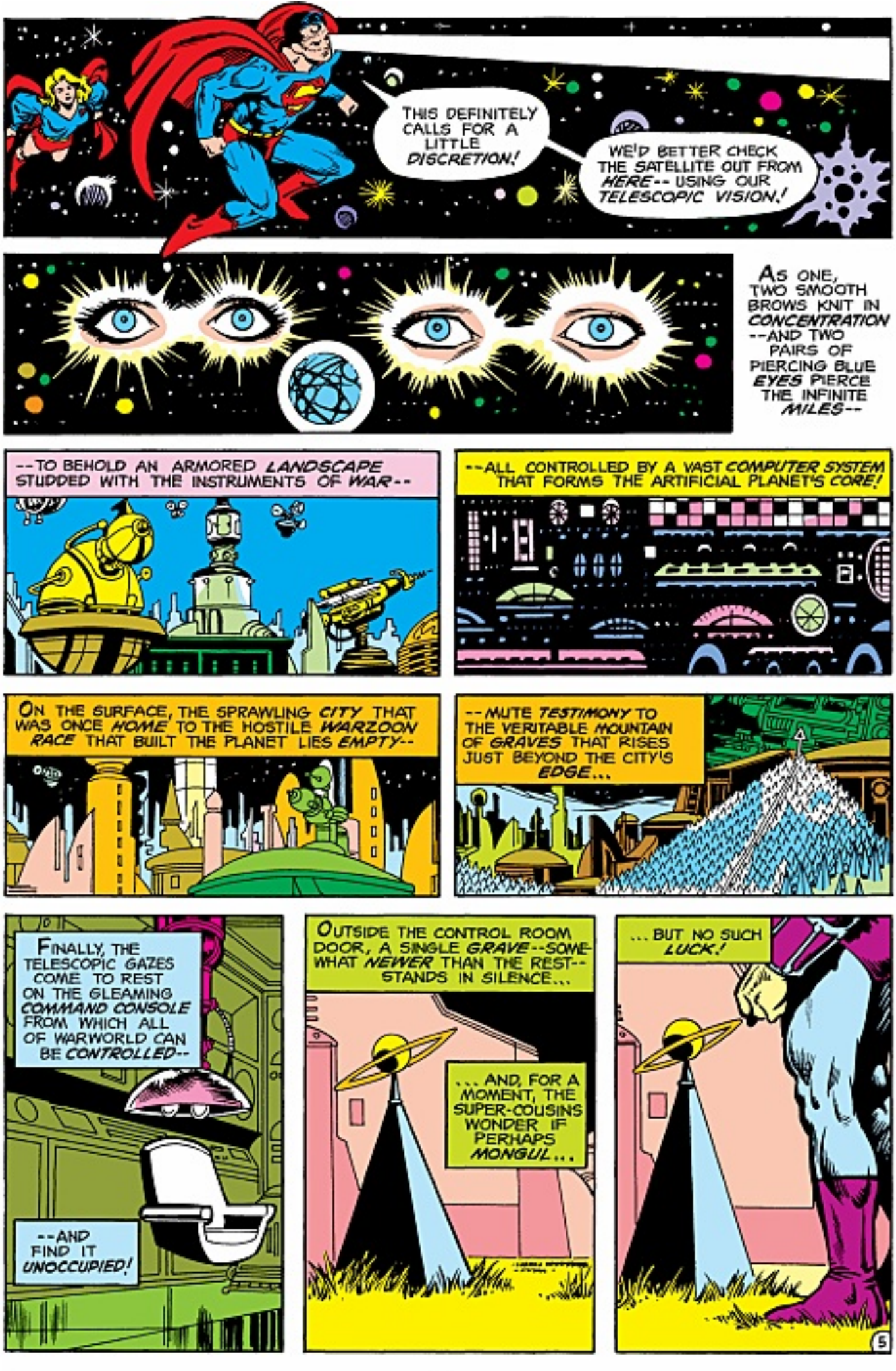
Cover for **DC COMICS PRESENTS #28** (1980)
Art by Jim Starlin


DC COMICS PROUDLY PRESENTS...
SUPERMAN AND SUPERGIRL™
Created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER
--TOGETHER IN AN ADVENTURE THAT SPANS THE UNIVERSE!
THEY SOAR THROUGH THE INFINITE VASTNESS OF SPACE AS IF IT WERE THEIR NATURAL ELEMENT--AND, PERHAPS, IN A WAY, IT IS!
FOR THEIR HOME WAS A PLANET LIGHT-YEARS DISTANT FROM OUR OWN--A WORLD DESTROYED IN A SHATTERING PAROXYSM OF PURE PRIMAL FURY.
AND NOW THE GALAXY'S TWO GREATEST DEFENDERS HURTLE ACROSS THE VOID TO PREVENT THEIR ADOPTED PLANET EARTH--AND UNTOLD OTHER WORLDS AS WELL--FROM SUFFERING A SIMILAR TERRIBLE FATE!
SOMEWHERE IN THE DARKNESS, IT IS WAITING--THE MOST DEVASTATING WEAPON EVER CONCEIVED...
WARWORLD!
LEN WEIN - SCRIPTER • JIM STARLIN + ROMEO TANGHAL - ARTISTS
BEN ODA - LETTERER • JERRY SERPE - COLORIST • JULIUS SCHWARTZ - EDITOR

STAY ALERT, COUSIN KARA--
--MONGUL IS PROBABLY EXPECTING US!
I DON'T DOUBT IT!
FROM WHAT YOU'VE TOLD ME, THAT SPACE-SKUNK PLANS AHEAD!
"I MEAN, FIRST HE KIDNAPS LOIS LANE, JIMMY OLSEN, AND STEVE LOMBARD TO INSURE YOU'D DO HIS BIDDING--
"THEN HE SENDS YOU ON A SCAVENGER HUNT HALFWAY ACROSS THE COSMOS TO OBTAIN A CERTAIN CRYSTAL KEY FOR HIM--
"--A KEY THAT AN ANCIENT ALIEN RACE CALLED THE LARGAS HAD PLACED UNDER THE SACRED PROTECTION OF YOUR OLD JUSTICE LEAGUE BUDDY, J'ONN J'ONZZ, THE MARTIAN MANHUNTER!
"J'ONN PUT UP A HEROIC BATTLE TO SAVE THE KEY--BUT IN THE END, HE WAS SIMPLY NO MATCH FOR YOU...
"... JUST AS YOU PROVED TO BE NO MATCH FOR MONGUL!
"EVEN AFTER YOU'D RESCUED YOUR THREE FRIENDS, MONGUL TOOK ADVANTAGE OF YOUR COMBAT FATIGUE TO ZAP YOU ONE--THEN HE AND THE CRYSTAL KEY SIMPLY... DISAPPEARED!"
AND THAT'S WHY I CAME LOOKING FOR YOU, KARA--AFTER I RETURNED LOIS AND THE OTHERS TO EARTH!
WE'VE GOT TO FIND MONGUL AND THE KEY--BEFORE HE CAN USE IT TO UNLEASH WARWORLD!
2

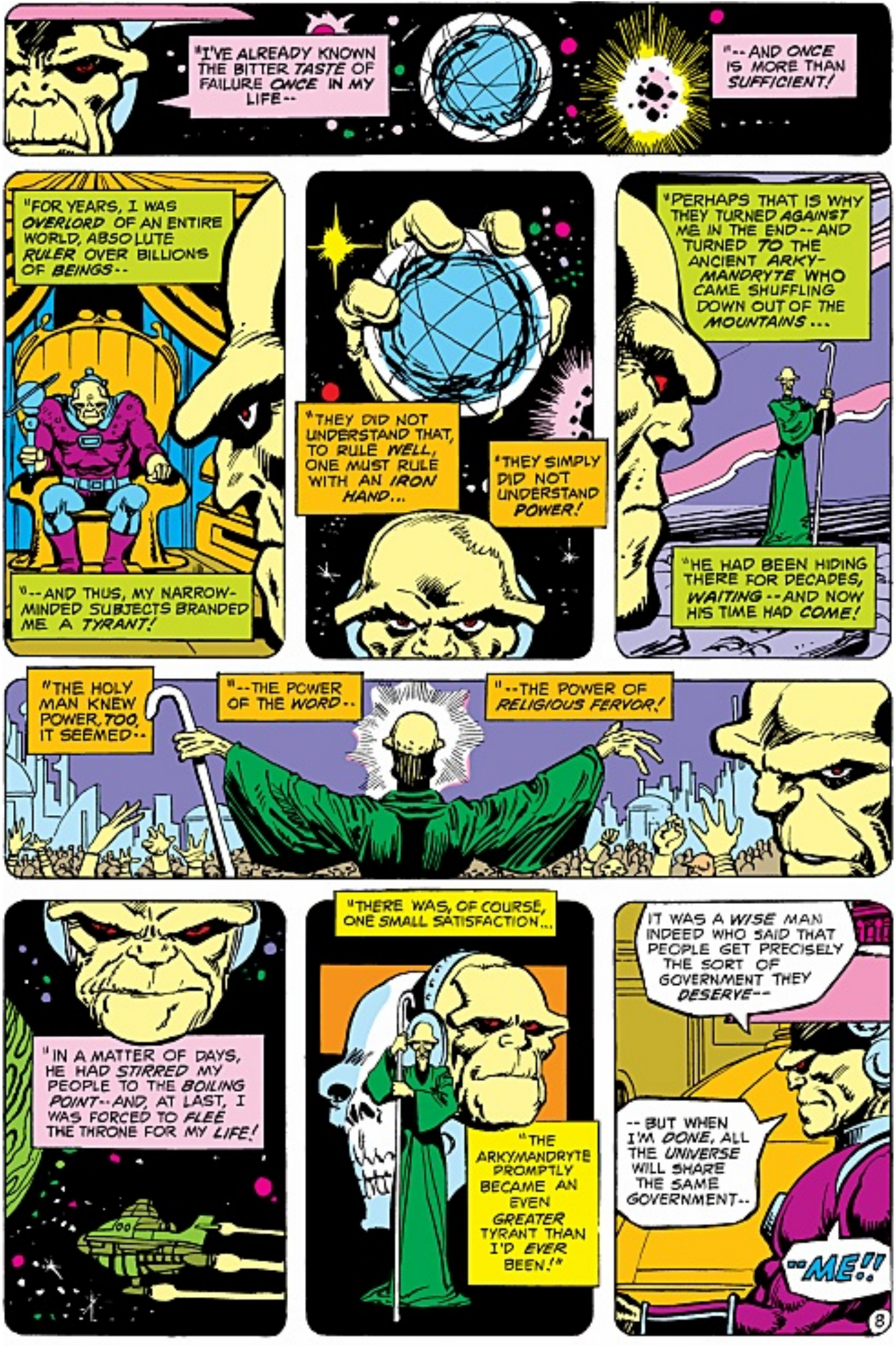

JUST WHAT IS THIS WARWORLD ANYWAY?
AN ARTIFICIAL SATELLITE-- DESIGNED BY THE BLOOD-THIRSTY WARZOON!
ITS SURFACE IS DOTTED WITH MILE-HIGH MISSILES AND MACRO-LASER CANNONS CAPABLE OF DECIMATING ENTIRE WORLDS!
HUGE NUCLEAR ENGINES ENABLE THE SATELLITE TO TRAVERSE SPACE AT INCREDIBLE SPEEDS--
--BUT ACCORDING TO J'ONN J'ONZZ, THIS IS WHERE IT WAS HIDDEN!
THERE'S JUST ONE LITTLE THING WRONG WITH WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, COUSIN...
...WARWORLD ISN'T HERE!
THEN WE'RE TOO LATE! MONGUL MUST'VE GOTTEN HERE BEFORE US AND USED THE KEY TO BYPASS WARWORLD'S DEFENSES!
NOW THERE ISN'T A THING IN ALL THE UNIVERSE THAT CAN STOP HIM!
WELL, I KNOW TWO "THINGS" WHO ARE CERTAINLY GONNA TRY!
YOU SAID THIS WARWORLD WAS PROPELLED BY HUGE NUCLEAR ENGINES, RIGHT?
THAT MEANS THEY'LL LEAVE A TRAIL OF SORTS WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SPOT WITH OUR MICROSCOPIC VISION!
THERE! A STREAM OF SUB-ATOMIC PARTICLES-- LEFT BEHIND BY THE SATELLITE'S EXHAUST!
TAKE A LOOK!
GREAT STARS! IT'S HEADING STRAIGHT FOR THE RAYDOR GALAXY!
THEN WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?
LET'S FIND THAT OVERBLOWN SATELLITE--
--AND SMASH IT!
DON'T BE SO OVERCONFIDENT, SUPERGIRL!
IT'S BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SLAUGHTERED!
3

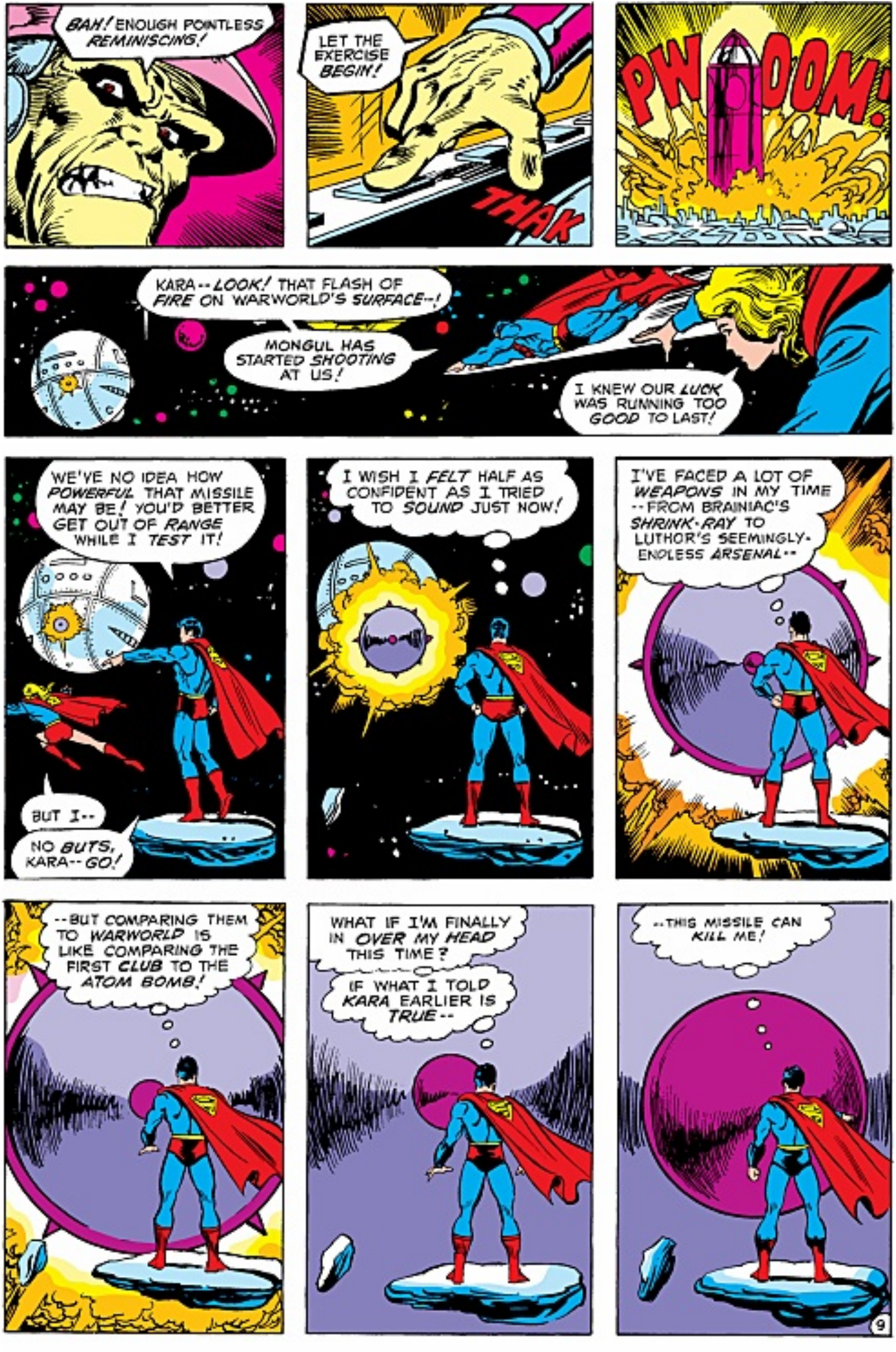

WHAT'S THERE TO BE AFRAID OF? WE'RE INVULNERABLE, AREN'T WE?
INVULNERABILITY IS A RELATIVE TERM, KARA!
ASIDE FROM KRYPTONITE AND MAGIC, WE'VE NEVER COME ACROSS ANYTHING THAT COULD REALLY DO US PHYSICAL HARM--
--BUT THEN, WE'VE NEVER COME UP AGAINST ANYTHING QUITE LIKE WARWORLD!
I'VE GOT THE UNCOMFORTABLE FEELING THAT THIS TIME WE MAY HAVE MET OUR MATCH!
POINT WELL TAKEN--I'LL REMEMBER THAT!
WHY HAVE YOU SUDDENLY STOPPED?
IT'S WARWORLD! I'VE SPOTTED IT-- ONLY A COUPLE OF LIGHT-YEARS AWAY!
"IT'S ABOUT TO PASS IN FRONT OF THAT WHITE DWARF STAR AND...
"...AND...
"GREAT RAO-- IT'S NOT POSSIBLE!
"NOTHING ARTIFICIAL COULD BE THAT HUGE!
"WARWORLD DIDN'T PASS IN FRONT OF THE STAR--
"--IT PASSED BEHIND IT!"
AND THE DWARF STAR'S OVERWHELMING GRAVITATIONAL PULL HAD ABSOLUTELY NO EFFECT ON IT!
WELL, YOU CERTAINLY WEREN'T EXAGGERATING, COUSIN--THAT SPACE-BALL GIVES A WHOLE NEW MEANING TO THE WORD BIG!
4


THIS DEFINITELY CALLS FOR A LITTLE DISCRETION!
WE'D BETTER CHECK THE SATELLITE OUT FROM HERE-- USING OUR TELESCOPIC VISION!
AS ONE, TWO SMOOTH BROWS KNIT IN CONCENTRATION --AND TWO PAIRS OF PIERCING BLUE EYES PIERCE THE INFINITE MILES--
--TO BEHOLD AN ARMORED LANDSCAPE STUDDED WITH THE INSTRUMENTS OF WAR--
--ALL CONTROLLED BY A VAST COMPUTER SYSTEM THAT FORMS THE ARTIFICIAL PLANET'S CORE!
ON THE SURFACE, THE SPRAWLING CITY THAT WAS ONCE HOME TO THE HOSTILE WARZOON RACE THAT BUILT THE PLANET LIES EMPTY--
--MUTE TESTIMONY TO THE VERITABLE MOUNTAIN OF GRAVES THAT RISES JUST BEYOND THE CITY'S EDGE...
FINALLY, THE TELESCOPIC GAZES COME TO REST ON THE GLEAMING COMMAND CONSOLE FROM WHICH ALL OF WARWORLD CAN BE CONTROLLED--
--AND FIND IT UNOCCUPIED!
OUTSIDE THE CONTROL ROOM DOOR, A SINGLE GRAVE--SOMEWHAT NEWER THAN THE REST-- STANDS IN SILENCE...
... AND, FOR A MOMENT, THE SUPER-COUSINS WONDER IF PERHAPS MONGUL...
... BUT NO SUCH LUCK!
5

IT'S HIM! THEN THERE'S STILL TIME--!
IF WE CAN REACH MONGUL BEFORE HE ENTERS THAT COMMAND CONSOLE--!
SUPERMAN--WAIT!
TAKE A GOOD LOOK BEHIND HIM!
"YOU MEAN THAT BUILDING, KARA?"
"NO--BEYOND THAT!"
"I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU! ALL I SEE ARE MORE BUILDINGS!"
"YOU'RE STILL TAKING THE NARROW VIEW--LOOK FURTHER!
"STUDY THE SKYSCAPE BEYOND ALL THE BUILDINGS--
"--AND SEE IT FOR WHAT IT REALLY IS!"
"GREAT SCOTT!"
THAT'S THE ONLY TROUBLE WITH HAVING SUPER-VISION, KARA--SOMETIMES YOU GET SO INVOLVED WITH MICROSCOPIC DETAILS THAT YOU MISS THE BIG PICTURE!
THOSE MISSILES ARE EVEN LARGER THAN J'ONN J'ONZZ DESCRIBED THEM!
I'M BEGINNING TO THINK I SHOULD NEVER HAVE GOTTEN YOU INVOLVED IN THIS!
BUT I AM INVOLVED NOW--SO DON'T GET ANY SILLY IDEAS ABOUT SENDING ME HOME TO SAFETY!
SO LONG AS WARWORLD EXISTS, NO PLACE IN ALL THE UNIVERSE IS TRULY SAFE!
NOW, C'MON--LET'S GO PAY MONGUL A LITTLE VISIT!
6

WRREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE...
WARWORLD'S AUTOMATIC ALARM SYSTEM HAS BEEN ACTIVATED!
APPARENTLY, SOMETHING HAS ENTERED THE SATELLITE'S DEFENSE-PERIMETER--
--AND IT DOESN'T EXACTLY TAKE ANY SORT OF GENIUS TO FIGURE OUT JUST WHO THAT SOMETHING IS!
IT APPEARS THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO ATTEMPT PSYCHIC RAPPORT WITH WARWORLD'S COMPUTER CORE--
--AND ONCE THAT IS ACCOMPLISHED--
--THUS...
--THIS SATELLITE AND I SHALL BE AS ONE!
"ALREADY MY PERCEPTIONS SPAN HALF A GALAXY--AND I CAN SEE THAT I ASSUMED CORRECTLY!
"MY WOULD-BE INTRUDER IS INDEED SUPERMAN-- AND HE'S BROUGHT HIS KRYPTONIAN COUSIN WITH HIM!"
THE FOOLS! THEY MERELY PROVIDE ME THE PERFECT GUINEA PIGS WITH WHICH TO TEST WARWORLD'S CAPABILITIES!
IT SHOULD PROVE A MOST INTERESTING TEST INDEED!
THIS TIME EVERYTHING WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT!
THIS TIME I MUST NOT FAIL!
7


"I'VE ALREADY KNOWN THE BITTER TASTE OF FAILURE ONCE IN MY LIFE--
"--AND ONCE IS MORE THAN SUFFICIENT!
"FOR YEARS, I WAS OVERLORD OF AN ENTIRE WORLD, ABSOLUTE RULER OVER BILLIONS OF BEINGS--
"--AND THUS, MY NARROW-MINDED SUBJECTS BRANDED ME A TYRANT!
"THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND THAT, TO RULE WELL, ONE MUST RULE WITH AN IRON HAND...
"THEY SIMPLY DID NOT UNDERSTAND POWER!
"PERHAPS THAT IS WHY THEY TURNED AGAINST ME IN THE END--AND TURNED TO THE ANCIENT ARKY-MANDRYTE WHO CAME SHUFFLING DOWN OUT OF THE MOUNTAINS...
"HE HAD BEEN HIDING THERE FOR DECADES, WAITING--AND NOW HIS TIME HAD COME!
"THE HOLY MAN KNEW POWER, TOO, IT SEEMED--
"--THE POWER OF THE WORD--
"--THE POWER OF RELIGIOUS FERVOR!
"IN A MATTER OF DAYS, HE HAD STIRRED MY PEOPLE TO THE BOILING POINT--AND, AT LAST, I WAS FORCED TO FLEE THE THRONE FOR MY LIFE!
"THERE WAS, OF COURSE, ONE SMALL SATISFACTION...
"THE ARKY-MANDRYTE PROMPTLY BECAME AN EVEN GREATER TYRANT THAN I'D EVER BEEN!"
IT WAS A WISE MAN INDEED WHO SAID THAT PEOPLE GET PRECISELY THE SORT OF GOVERNMENT THEY DESERVE--
-- BUT WHEN I'M DONE, ALL THE UNIVERSE WILL SHARE THE SAME GOVERNMENT--
--ME!!
8


BAH! ENOUGH POINTLESS REMINISCING!
LET THE EXERCISE BEGIN!
THAK
PWOOM!
KARA--LOOK! THAT FLASH OF FIRE ON WARWORLD'S SURFACE--!
MONGUL HAS STARTED SHOOTING AT US!
I KNEW OUR LUCK WAS RUNNING TOO GOOD TO LAST!
WE'VE NO IDEA HOW POWERFUL THAT MISSILE MAY BE! YOU'D BETTER GET OUT OF RANGE WHILE I TEST IT!
BUT I--
NO BUTS, KARA--GO!
I WISH I FELT HALF AS CONFIDENT AS I TRIED TO SOUND JUST NOW!
I'VE FACED A LOT OF WEAPONS IN MY TIME --FROM BRAINIAC'S SHRINK-RAY TO LUTHOR'S SEEMINGLY-ENDLESS ARSENAL--
--BUT COMPARING THEM TO WARWORLD IS LIKE COMPARING THE FIRST CLUB TO THE ATOM BOMB!
WHAT IF I'M FINALLY IN OVER MY HEAD THIS TIME?
IF WHAT I TOLD KARA EARLIER IS TRUE--
--THIS MISSILE CAN KILL ME!
9

IN THE VACUUM OF SPACE, THE MISSILE'S DETONATION MAKES NO SOUND--
--BUT SMALL PLANETOIDS FOR COUNTLESS MILES IN EVERY DIRECTION ARE INSTANTLY DISINTEGRATED BY THE IMPACT--
--AND IN THE DEBRIS THAT FORMS THE EXPLOSION'S AFTERMATH, A CERTAIN MAN OF STEEL IS NOWHERE TO BE SEEN...
SUPERMAN--?
COUSIN, WHERE ARE YOU?
O-OVER HERE, KARA-- AGAINST THIS ROCK!
WOW, LOOK AT YOU!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YES-- BUT JUST BARELY!
I DIVED OUT OF THE MISSILE'S PATH AT THE LAST POSSIBLE INSTANT--
--BUT THE CONCUSSION STILL JARRED ME RIGHT THROUGH TO THE SOLES OF MY BOOTS!
AT LEAST I LEARNED SOMETHING...
WHAT'S THAT?
WE COULD NEVER SURVIVE A COLLISION WITH TWO OF THOSE--
OH... MY... GOD.
10

WHEW! THAT WAS MUCH TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT!
WE CAN'T LET OUR GUARD DOWN, EVEN FOR AN INSTANT-- OR IT'LL BE THE DEATH OF US BOTH!
THE DEATH OF US...
OF COURSE-- THAT'S IT!
THAT HAS TO BE IT!!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
KARA, I THINK I KNOW HOW TO DEFEAT WARWORLD--
-- BUT WE'LL HAVE TO FACE EVERYTHING THAT SATELLITE CAN THROW AT US TO PROVE IT!
ARE YOU GAME?
ARE YOU KIDDING?
WHO WANTS TO LIVE FOREVER ANYWAY?
THE INCORRIGIBLE CRETINS! THEY BARELY SURVIVED A CONFRONTATION WITH THE LEAST OF WARWORLD'S WEAPONRY--
--AND YET THEY PERSIST IN THEIR SUICIDAL ATTACK!
VERY WELL THEN! IF IT'S A WAR THEY WANT--
--THEN THAT'S PRECISELY WHAT THEY SHALL HAVE!
THE MEREST THOUGHT CROSSES MONGUL'S JAUNDICED BROW, AND A SAVAGE SWARM OF MISSILES STREAKS SKYWARD AT HIS COMMAND--
--EVEN AS FLOATING MACRO-LASER CANNONS CROSS THE STAR-SWEPT HEAVENS WITH DEVASTATING BEAMS OF FIRE...

UH-OH! SOMETHING TELLS ME MONGUL ISN'T KIDDING ANY MORE!
PERFECT! HE'S REACTING EXACTLY AS I'D HOPED HE WOULD!

TRY TO EVADE THE MACRO-LASER BEAMS AS BEST YOU CAN, KARA--
--AND USE YOUR HEAT VISION TO TRIGGER THE MISSILES FROM A SAFE DISTANCE!
WHATEVER YOU SAY, COUSIN! I'LL FOLLOW YOUR INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LETTER--

--BUT I STILL DON'T SEE WHAT YOU'RE HOPING TO ACCOMPLISH BY ALL THIS!

IT'S SIMPLE--I'M FORCING MONGUL TO PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS!
DO YOU REMEMBER THAT MOUNTAIN OF GRAVES WE NOTICED ON WARWORLD?
THAT'S WHAT GAVE ME THE ANSWER!
12

THE WARZOONS WEREN'T BURIED IN A MASS GRAVE AS THERE'D BE IF THE RACE WAS DESTROYED BY SOME GREAT ILLNESS!
YOU'RE RIGHT! THE WARZOONS MUST'VE DIED ONE BY ONE! THEY BURIED EACH OTHER--
--EXCEPT FOR THE LAST ONE BURIED BY THE PEACE-LOVING LARGAS!
PRECISELY! AND THERE'S ONLY ONE THING ON THAT ENTIRE SATELLITE CAPABLE OF KILLING THE WARZOON ONE AT A TIME--
--THE CONTROL HELMET IN THE COMMAND CONSOLE!
THE MASSIVE ENERGY-DRAIN MUST'VE PROVEN TOO MUCH FOR THEIR MINDS TO ENDURE!
"ONE BY ONE THEY WERE DESTROYED BY THE VERY WEAPON THEIR WARLIKE RACE HAD SPENT UNTOLD CENTURIES CREATING--
"ONE BY ONE, THEY DIED-- VICTIMS OF MASSIVE CEREBRAL HEMORRHAGE--
"--AND THEIR OWN INSATIABLE LUST FOR POWER!"
13

IT WORKED! THE SATELLITE HAS CEASED FIRE--!
AND I SEE MONGUL SPRAWLED ON THE FLOOR OF THE CONTROL ROOM-- UNCONSCIOUS!

WE'D BETTER GO COLLECT HIM-- BEFORE HE HAS A CHANCE TO RECOVER!
AND THEN WE CAN START TAKING WARWORLD APART-- RIVET-BY-RIVET!

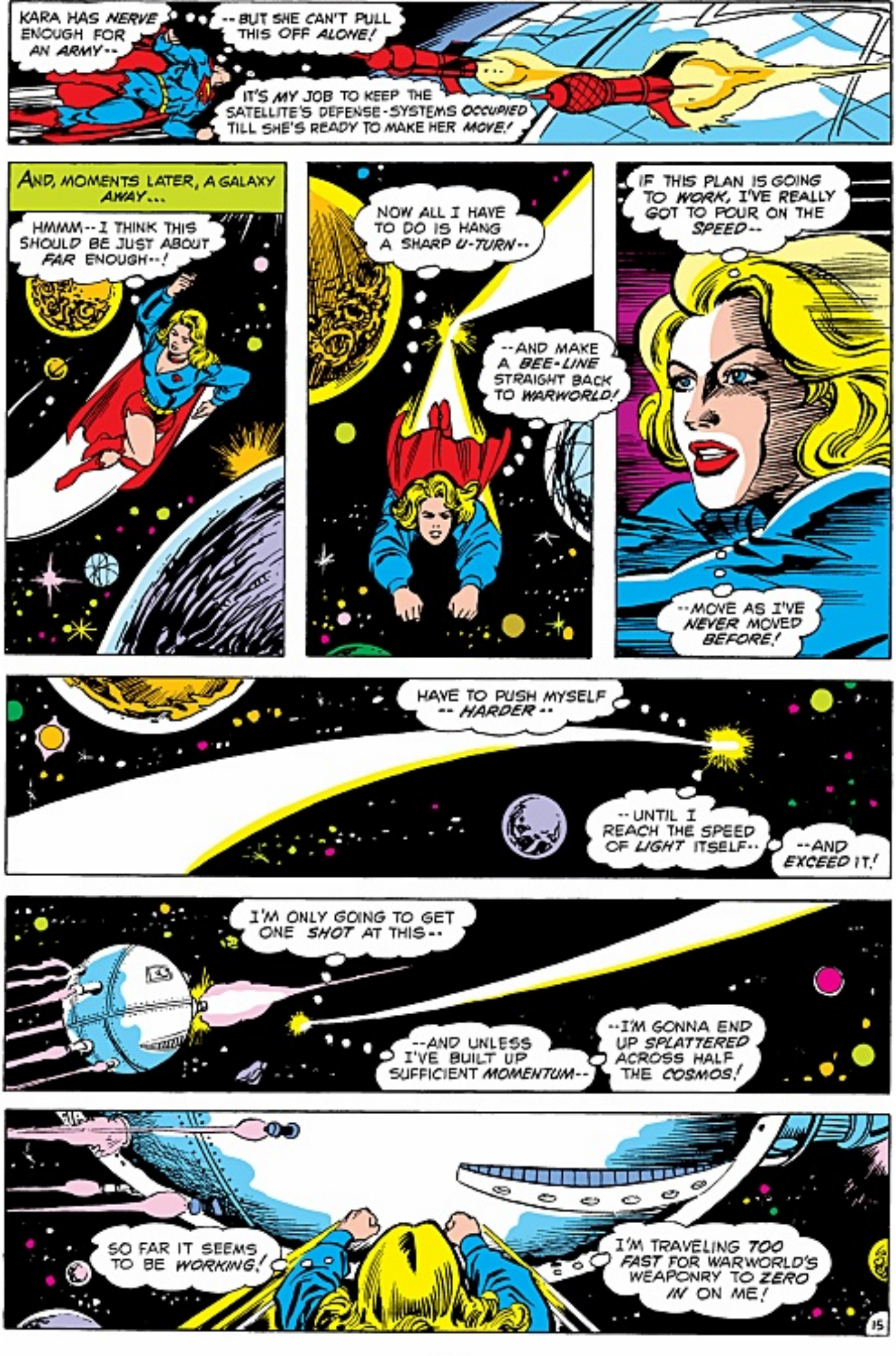
I HATE TO SAY IT, COUSIN--

--BUT I DON'T THINK THAT'S GOING TO BE EASY AS WE HOPED!
ZZZZZZZZZZZZZ
IUH--?!?
THE SATELLITE IS SHOOTING AT US AGAIN--!

IT'S THE ONE THING WE HADN'T COUNTED ON--
--NOW THAT MONGUL HAS ACTIVATED WARWORLD, ITS SYSTEMS ARE OPERATING AUTOMATICALLY!

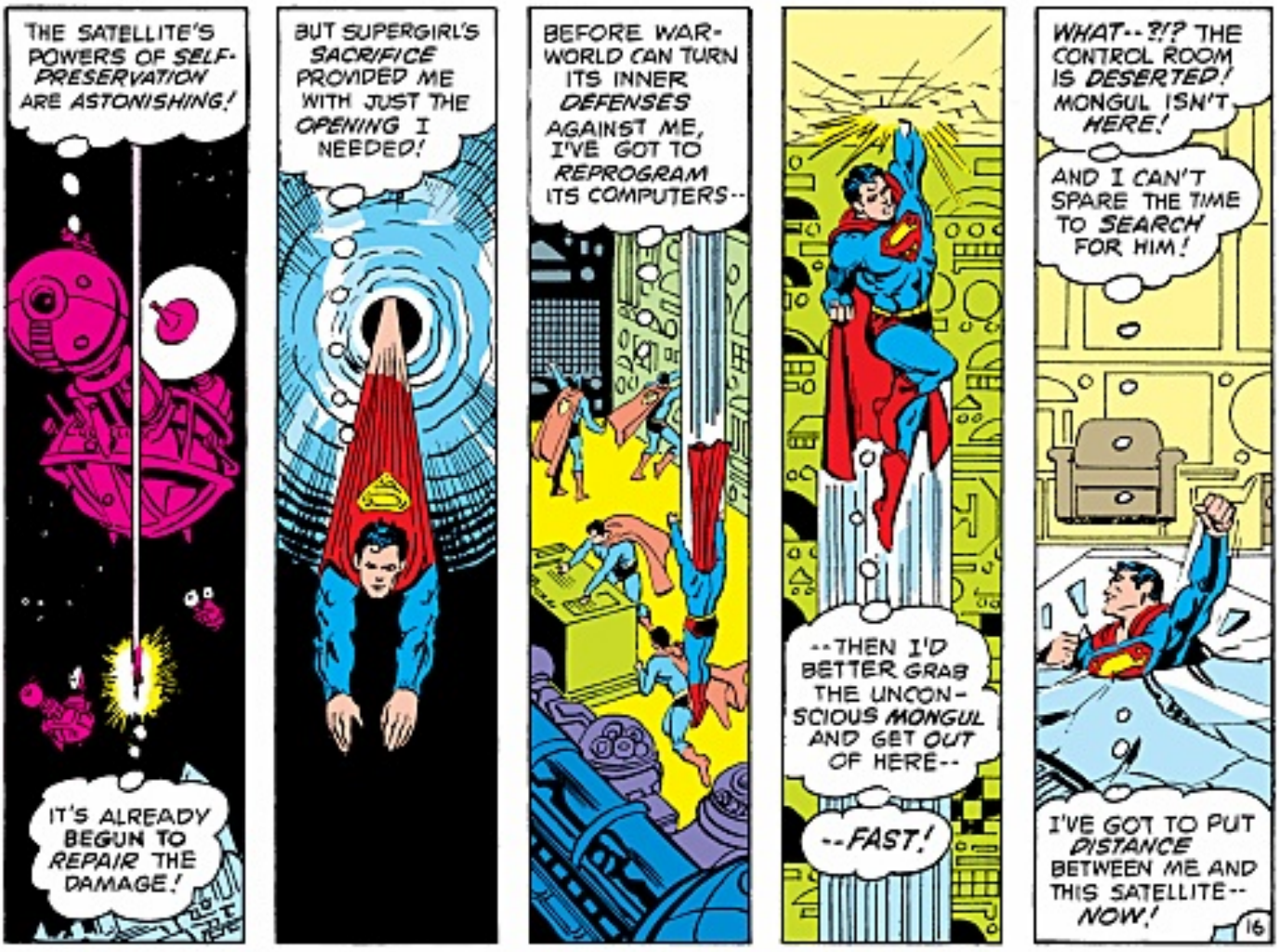
THERE MAY STILL BE A WAY TO BEAT IT, KARA-- BUT IT MEANS TAKING A DANGEROUS RISK!
WE'VE COME TOO FAR TO GIVE UP NOW, SUPERMAN!
THEN LISTEN CLOSE--AND I'LL EXPLAIN!

USING THE SUPER-VENTRILOQUISM THAT HAS ENABLED HIM TO COMMUNICATE IN THE VOID, THE METROPOLIS MARVEL SWIFTLY OUTLINES HIS PLAN-- THEN...
GOOD LUCK, SUPERGIRL!
THANKS... I THINK I'M GONNA NEED IT!
14

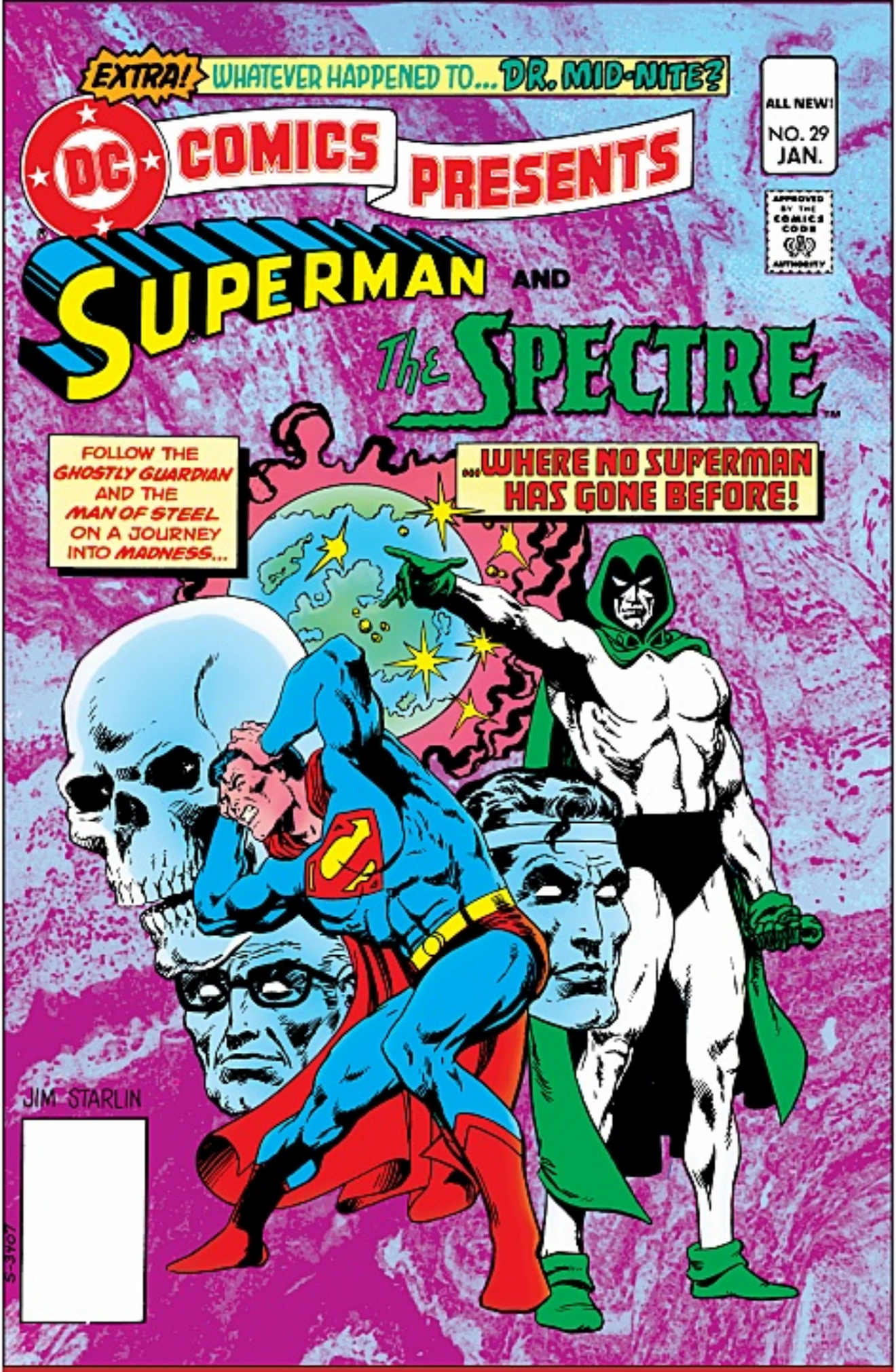

KARA HAS NERVE ENOUGH FOR AN ARMY--
--BUT SHE CAN'T PULL THIS OFF ALONE!
IT'S MY JOB TO KEEP THE SATELLITE'S DEFENSE-SYSTEMS OCCUPIED TILL SHE'S READY TO MAKE HER MOVE!
AND, MOMENTS LATER, A GALAXY AWAY...
HMMM--I THINK THIS SHOULD BE JUST ABOUT FAR ENOUGH--!
NOW ALL I HAVE TO DO IS HANG A SHARP U-TURN--
--AND MAKE A BEE-LINE STRAIGHT BACK TO WARWORLD!
IF THIS PLAN IS GOING TO WORK, I'VE REALLY GOT TO POUR ON THE SPEED--
--MOVE AS I'VE NEVER MOVED BEFORE!
HAVE TO PUSH MYSELF -- HARDER --
--UNTIL I REACH THE SPEED OF LIGHT ITSELF--
--AND EXCEED IT!
I'M ONLY GOING TO GET ONE SHOT AT THIS--
--AND UNLESS I'VE BUILT UP SUFFICIENT MOMENTUM--
--I'M GONNA END UP SPLATTERED ACROSS HALF THE COSMOS!
SO FAR IT SEEMS TO BE WORKING!
I'M TRAVELING TOO FAST FOR WARWORLD'S WEAPONRY TO ZERO IN ON ME!
15

THEN, AT A SPEED THAT DEFIES THE IMAGINATION, THE GIRL OF STEEL STRIKES THE GARGANTUAN SATELLITE--
--PUNCHES THROUGH IT LIKE A BULLET THROUGH A SNOWBALL--
--AND HER VELOCITY UNDIMINISHED, HURTLES ONWARD, TO BE SWIFTLY SWALLOWED ONCE MORE BY THE VOID!

BY THE STARS-- KARA DID IT!
SHE PUNCHED A HOLE RIGHT THROUGH WARWORLD'S COMPUTER CORE!


THE SATELLITE'S POWERS OF SELF-PRESERVATION ARE ASTONISHING!
IT'S ALREADY BEGUN TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE!
BUT SUPERGIRL'S SACRIFICE PROVIDED ME WITH JUST THE OPENING I NEEDED!
BEFORE WARWORLD CAN TURN ITS INNER DEFENSES AGAINST ME, I'VE GOT TO REPROGRAM ITS COMPUTERS--
--THEN I'D BETTER GRAB THE UNCONSCIOUS MONGUL AND GET OUT OF HERE--
--FAST!
WHAT--?!? THE CONTROL ROOM IS DESERTED! MONGUL ISN'T HERE!
AND I CAN'T SPARE THE TIME TO SEARCH FOR HIM!
I'VE GOT TO PUT DISTANCE BETWEEN ME AND THIS SATELLITE-- NOW!
16

DESPITE ALL OUR MUCH-VAUNTED POWER, KARA AND I WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE OF DEFEATING WARWORLD IN A HEAD-ON CONFRONTATION--
--SO I'VE DONE THE ONLY OTHER THING POSSIBLE:
KWA-WA-WA-WHOOM!
I REDIRECTED THE SATELLITE'S DEFENSE-SYSTEMS IN ON ITSELF!
IT'S GONE--NOT ONE TRACE OF IT! IT SEEMS THE ONLY THING CAPABLE OF DESTROYING WARWORLD...
...WAS WARWORLD ITSELF!
THE UNIVERSE HAS BEEN SAVED --AT LEAST FROM THIS MENACE!
PERHAPS WHEREVER THEY LIE, THE LARGAS WILL REST EASIER NOW...
...AND PERHAPS J'ONN J'ONZZ WILL SOMEDAY FORGIVE ME!
AND THAT LEAVES ME WITH JUST ONE SMALL PROBLEM...
WHAT IN BLAZES HAS HAPPENED TO SUPERGIRL?
17



Cover for **DC COMICS PRESENTS #29** (1980)
Art by Jim Starlin

DC COMICS PROUDLY PRESENTS...
SUPERMAN AND The SPECTRE
Created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER
--TOGETHER IN A CONFRONTATION THAT WILL REDEFINE MORTALITY!
COUSIN KARA...?
SUPERGIRL-- WHERE ARE YOU?
A REASONABLE ENOUGH QUESTION-- BUT ONE WHOSE ASTONISHING ANSWER WILL TAKE THE MAN OF STEEL BEYOND THE BOUNDS OF INFINITY..
WHERE NO SUPERMAN HAS GONE BEFORE
LEN WEIN: Scripter
JIM STARLIN and ROMEO TANGHAL: Illustrators
JOHN COSTANZA: Letterer
JERRY SERPE: Colorist
JULIUS SCHWARTZ: Editor

"I HAVE TO *THINK*... TRY TO MAKE SOME *SENSE* OF THIS... BUT IT'S ALL BEEN HAPPENING SO *FAST*...

"FIRST LOIS LANE, JIMMY OLSEN, AND STEVE LOMBARD ARE TAKEN *CAPTIVE* BY A MALEVOLENT ALIEN DESPOT CALLED *MONGUL*--

"--WHO OFFERS ME THE SAFE *RETURN* OF MY FRIENDS IN EXCHANGE FOR A UNIQUE *KEY* BEING GUARDED BY MY OLD BUDDY--*J'ONN J'ONZZ, THE MARTIAN MANHUNTER!*

"AFTER I RELUCTANTLY *DEFEAT* MY EX-JUSTICE LEAGUE COMRADE, MONGUL *STEALS* THE KEY FROM ME--AND I DISCOVER HE PLANS TO USE IT TO UNLEASH *WARWORLD*, THE MOST DESTRUCTIVE *WEAPON* EVER DEVISED...

"RETURNING MY RESCUED FRIENDS TO *EARTH*, I ENLISTED THE AID OF MY COUSIN *SUPERGIRL*, TO HELP ME TRACK DOWN WARWORLD--AND HOPEFULLY *DESTROY* IT...

"BUT IN TRYING TO *ACCOMPLISH* THAT, KARA WAS FORCED TO FLY *FASTER* THAN SHE HAS EVER GONE BEFORE--SO THAT SHE COULD PENETRATE WARWORLD'S *DEFENSE SHIELDS*--

"--AND THUS ALLOW ME *ACCESS* TO THE VAST *COMPUTER SYSTEM* THAT FORMED THE KILLER-SATELLITE'S *CORE*...

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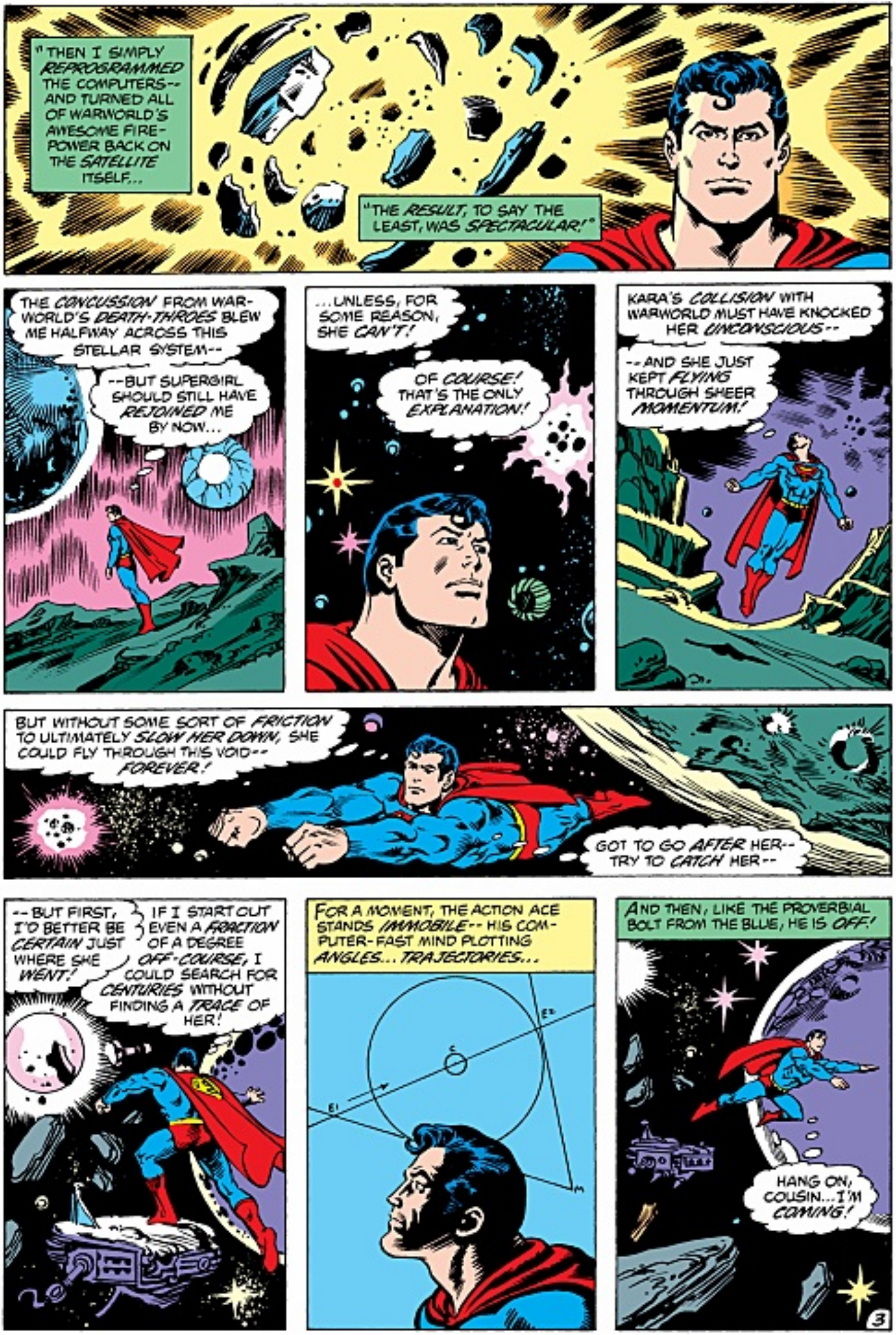
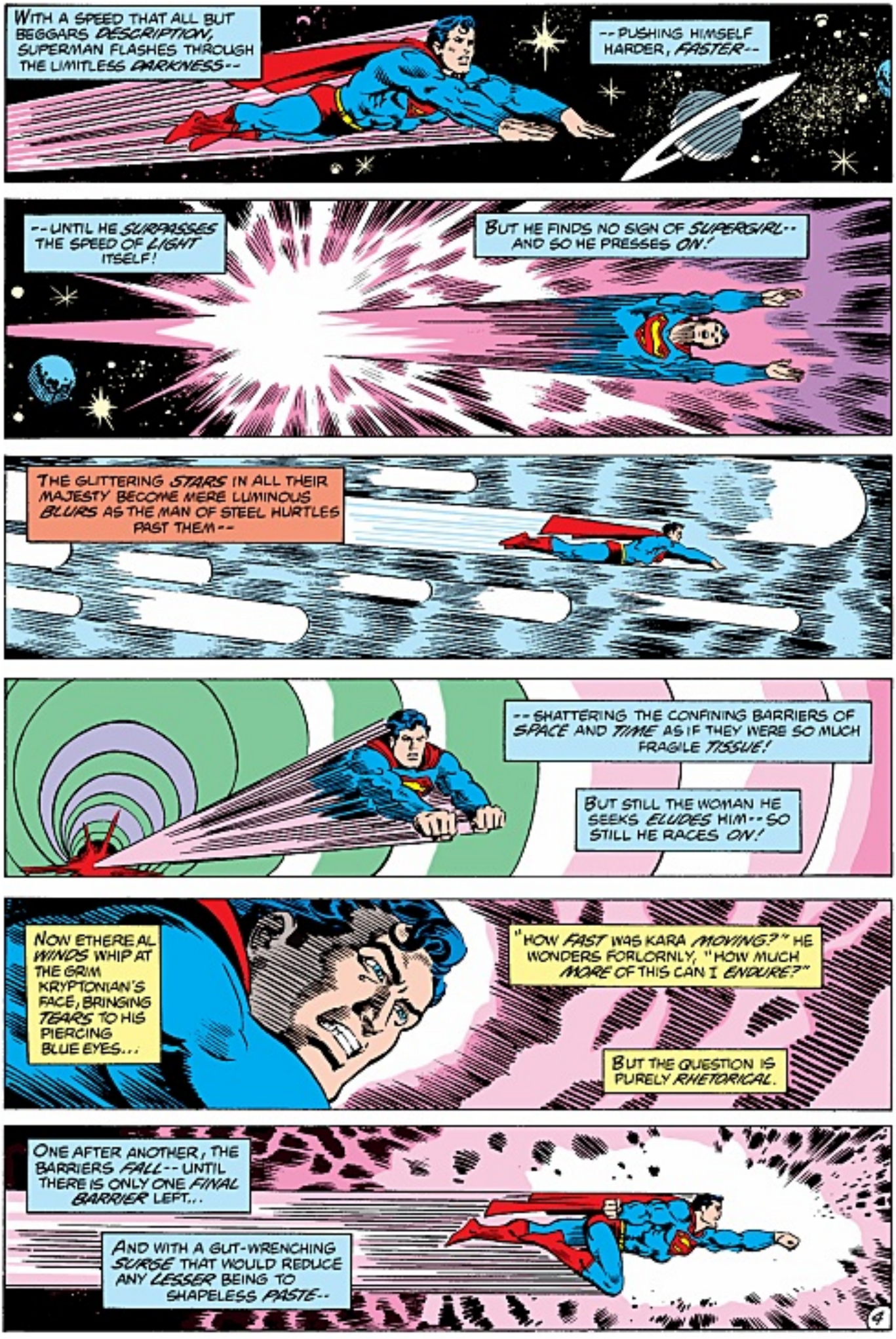
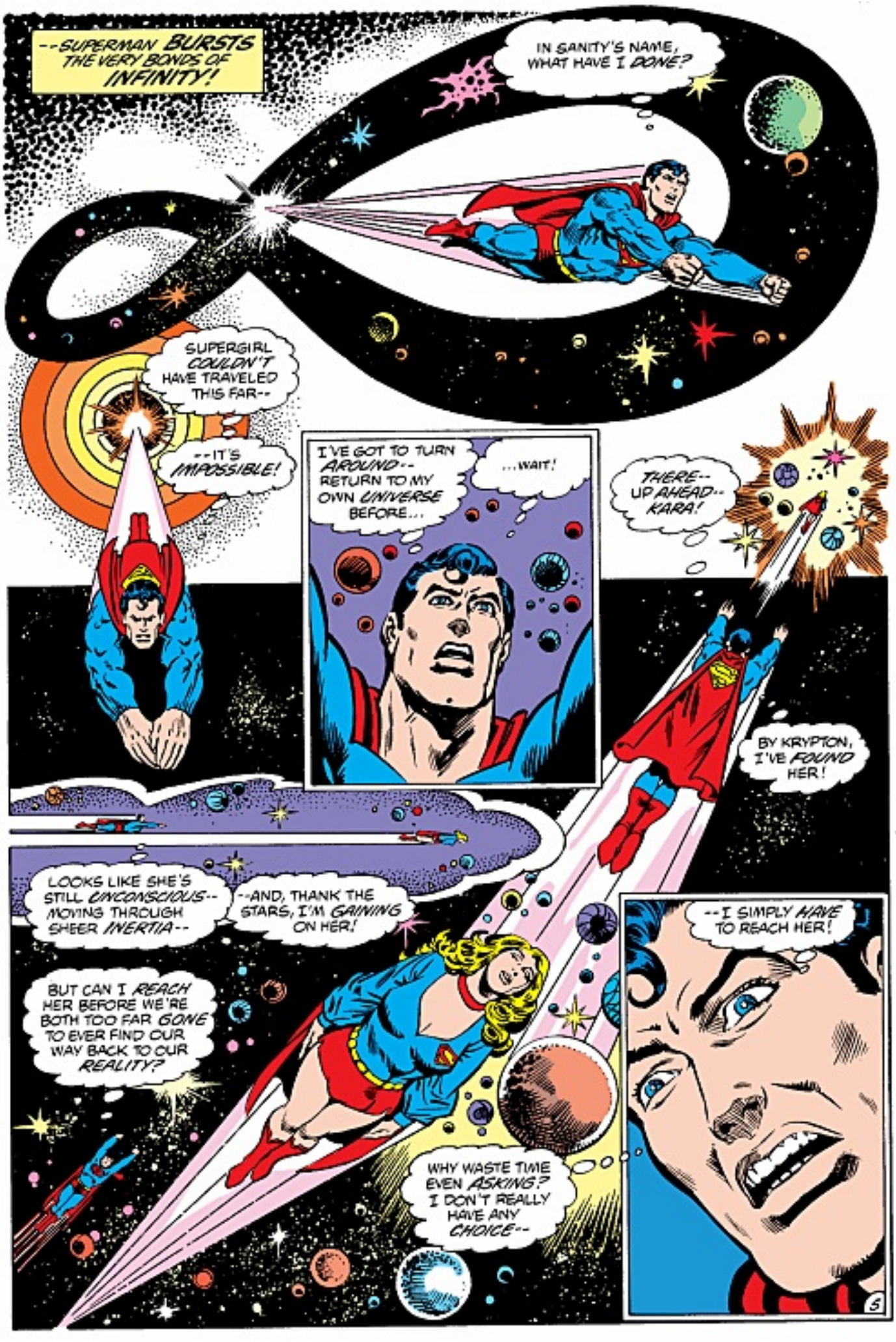
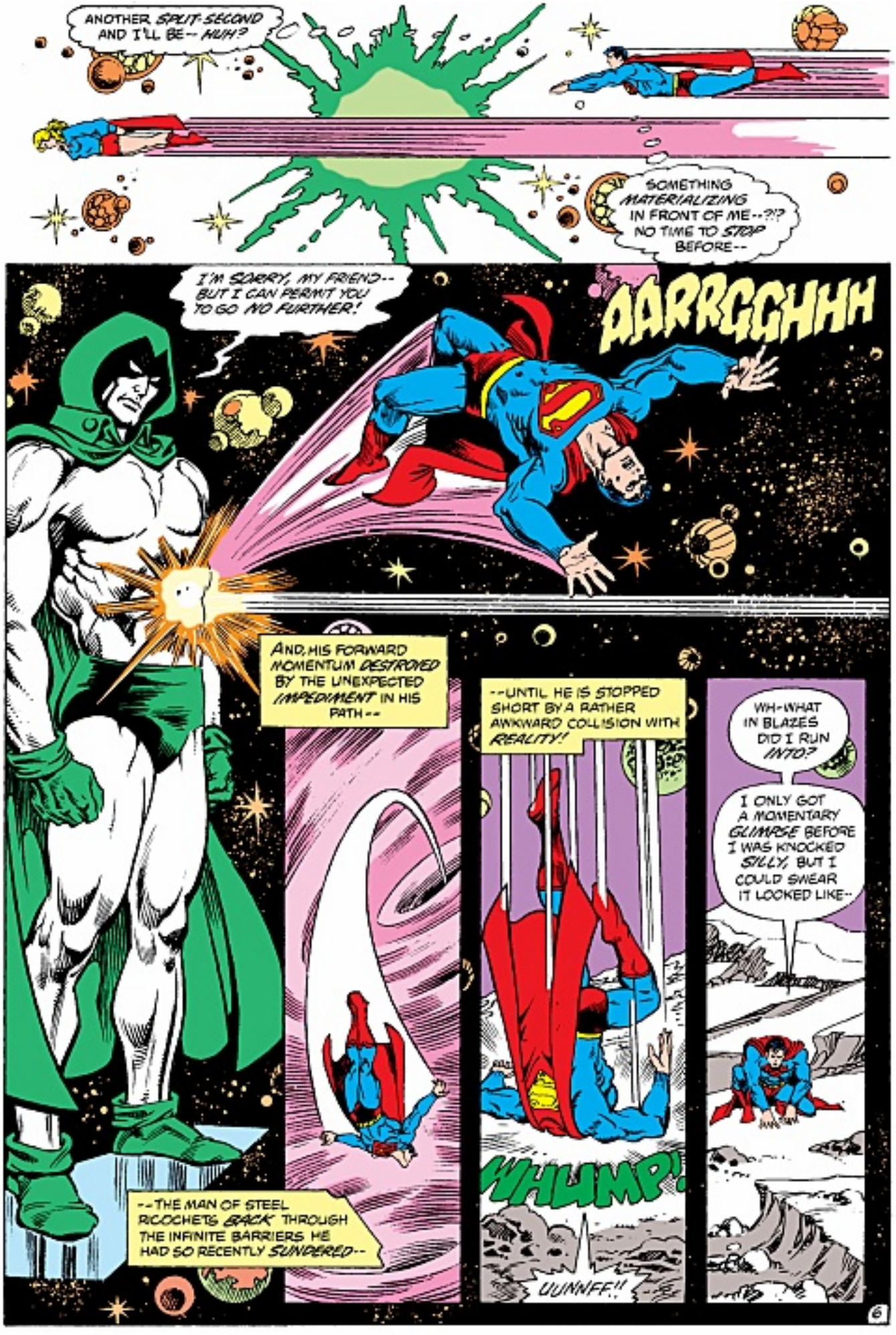

"THEN I SIMPLY REPROGRAMMED THE COMPUTERS-- AND TURNED ALL OF WARWORLD'S AWESOME FIRE-POWER BACK ON THE SATELLITE ITSELF...
"THE RESULT, TO SAY THE LEAST, WAS SPECTACULAR!"
THE CONCUSSION FROM WARWORLD'S DEATH-THROES BLEW ME HALFWAY ACROSS THIS STELLAR SYSTEM--
--BUT SUPERGIRL SHOULD STILL HAVE REJOINED ME BY NOW...
...UNLESS, FOR SOME REASON, SHE CAN'T!
OF COURSE! THAT'S THE ONLY EXPLANATION!
KARA'S COLLISION WITH WARWORLD MUST HAVE KNOCKED HER UNCONSCIOUS--
--AND SHE JUST KEPT FLYING THROUGH SHEER MOMENTUM!
BUT WITHOUT SOME SORT OF FRICTION TO ULTIMATELY SLOW HER DOWN, SHE COULD FLY THROUGH THIS VOID-- FOREVER!
GOT TO GO AFTER HER-- TRY TO CATCH HER--
-- BUT FIRST, I'D BETTER BE CERTAIN JUST WHERE SHE WENT!
IF I START OUT EVEN A FRACTION OF A DEGREE OFF-COURSE, I COULD SEARCH FOR CENTURIES WITHOUT FINDING A TRACE OF HER!
FOR A MOMENT, THE ACTION ACE STANDS IMMOBILE-- HIS COMPUTER-FAST MIND PLOTTING ANGLES... TRAJECTORIES...
AND THEN, LIKE THE PROVERBIAL BOLT FROM THE BLUE, HE IS OFF!
HANG ON, COUSIN... I'M COMING!
3


WITH A SPEED THAT ALL BUT BEGGARS DESCRIPTION, SUPERMAN FLASHES THROUGH THE LIMITLESS DARKNESS--
--PUSHING HIMSELF HARDER, FASTER--
--UNTIL HE SURPASSES THE SPEED OF LIGHT ITSELF!
BUT HE FINDS NO SIGN OF SUPERGIRL-- AND SO HE PRESSES ON!
THE GLITTERING STARS IN ALL THEIR MAJESTY BECOME MERE LUMINOUS BLURS AS THE MAN OF STEEL HURTLES PAST THEM--
--SHATTERING THE CONFINING BARRIERS OF SPACE AND TIME AS IF THEY WERE SO MUCH FRAGILE TISSUE!
BUT STILL THE WOMAN HE SEEKS ELUDES HIM--SO STILL HE RACES ON!
NOW ETHEREAL WINDS WHIP AT THE GRIM KRYPTONIAN'S FACE, BRINGING TEARS TO HIS PIERCING BLUE EYES...
"HOW FAST WAS KARA MOVING?" HE WONDERS FORLORNLY, "HOW MUCH MORE OF THIS CAN I ENDURE?"
BUT THE QUESTION IS PURELY RHETORICAL.
ONE AFTER ANOTHER, THE BARRIERS FALL--UNTIL THERE IS ONLY ONE FINAL BARRIER LEFT...
AND WITH A GUT-WRENCHING SURGE THAT WOULD REDUCE ANY LESSER BEING TO SHAPELESS PASTE--
4


--SUPERMAN BURSTS THE VERY BONDS OF INFINITY!
IN SANITY'S NAME, WHAT HAVE I DONE?
SUPERGIRL COULDN'T HAVE TRAVELED THIS FAR--
--IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
I'VE GOT TO TURN AROUND-- RETURN TO MY OWN UNIVERSE BEFORE...
...WAIT!
THERE-- UP AHEAD-- KARA!
BY KRYPTON, I'VE FOUND HER!
LOOKS LIKE SHE'S STILL UNCONSCIOUS-- MOVING THROUGH SHEER INERTIA--
--AND, THANK THE STARS, I'M GAINING ON HER!
BUT CAN I REACH HER BEFORE WE'RE BOTH TOO FAR GONE TO EVER FIND OUR WAY BACK TO OUR REALITY?
WHY WASTE TIME EVEN ASKING? I DON'T REALLY HAVE ANY CHOICE--
--I SIMPLY HAVE TO REACH HER!
5


ANOTHER SPLIT-SECOND AND I'LL BE-- HUH?
SOMETHING MATERIALIZING IN FRONT OF ME--?!? NO TIME TO STOP BEFORE--
I'M SORRY, MY FRIEND-- BUT I CAN PERMIT YOU TO GO NO FURTHER!
AARRGGHHH
AND, HIS FORWARD MOMENTUM DESTROYED BY THE UNEXPECTED IMPEDIMENT IN HIS PATH--
--UNTIL HE IS STOPPED SHORT BY A RATHER AWKWARD COLLISION WITH REALITY!
WH-WHAT IN BLAZES DID I RUN INTO?
I ONLY GOT A MOMENTARY GLIMPSE BEFORE I WAS KNOCKED SILLY, BUT I COULD SWEAR IT LOOKED LIKE--
--THE MAN OF STEEL RICOCHETS BACK THROUGH THE INFINITE BARRIERS HE HAD SO RECENTLY SUNDERED--
WHUMP!
UUNNFF!!
6

--THE SPECTRE?!?
SO IT WAS YOU WHO PREVENTED ME FROM REACHING SUPERGIRL!
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT YOU'VE JUST DONE?
I HAVE MERELY DONE MY DUTY, SUPERMAN-- NOTHING MORE!

YOU WERE TRAVELING TOO FAST-- TOO FAR-- TOWARD REALMS NO MORTAL EYE MAY BE PERMITTED TO BEHOLD...
...AND THUS, I WAS DISPATCHED TO PUT AN END TO YOUR FLIGHT!

BUT, SUPERGIRL--
--IS QUITE UNCONSCIOUS, AND THUS BLISSFULLY UNAWARE OF THAT WHICH SHE MIGHT OTHERWISE SEE!

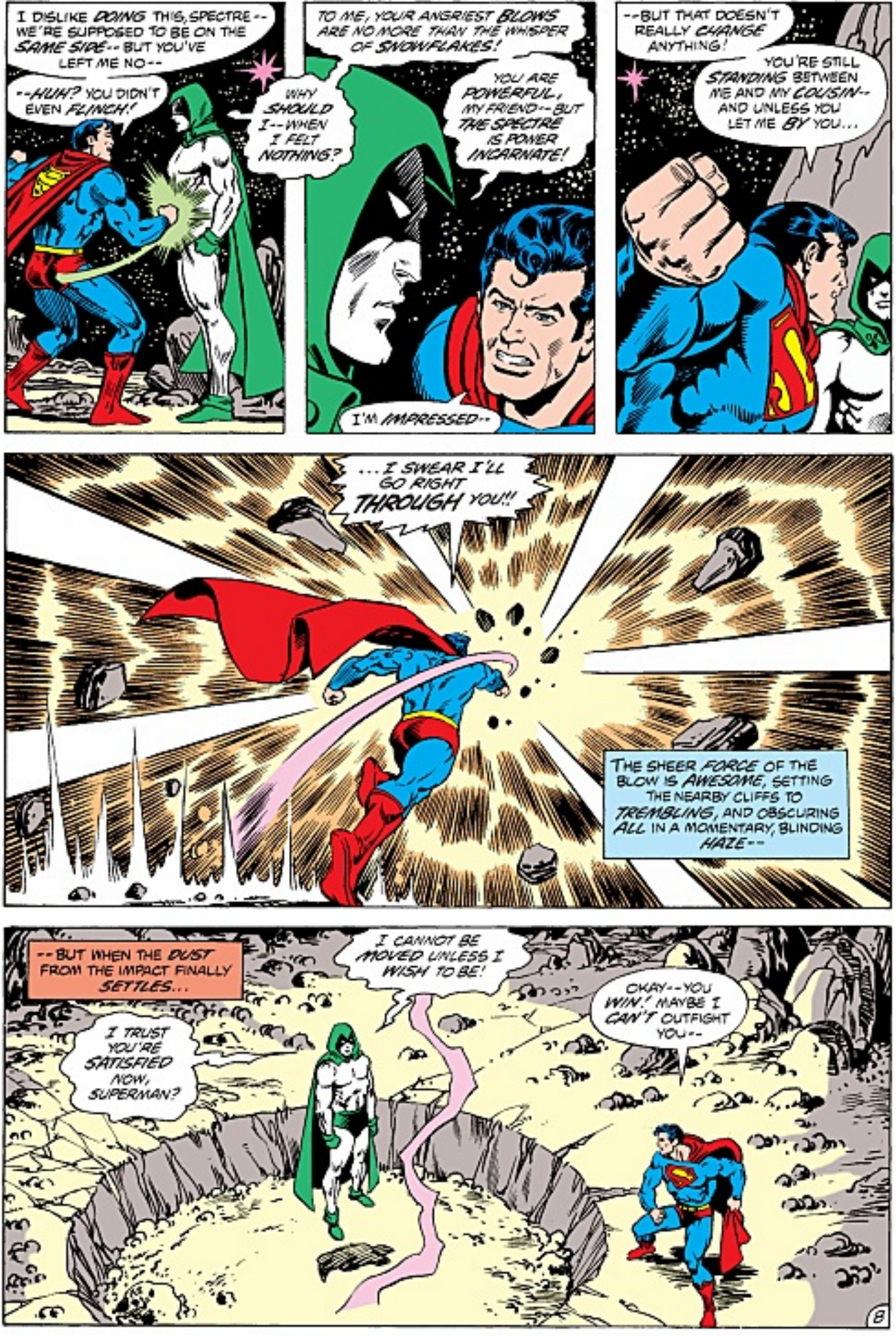
WELL, I'M NOT INTERESTED IN WHATEVER IT IS YOU'RE TRYING TO PROTECT, SPECTRE!
I JUST WANT TO SAVE MY COUSIN--

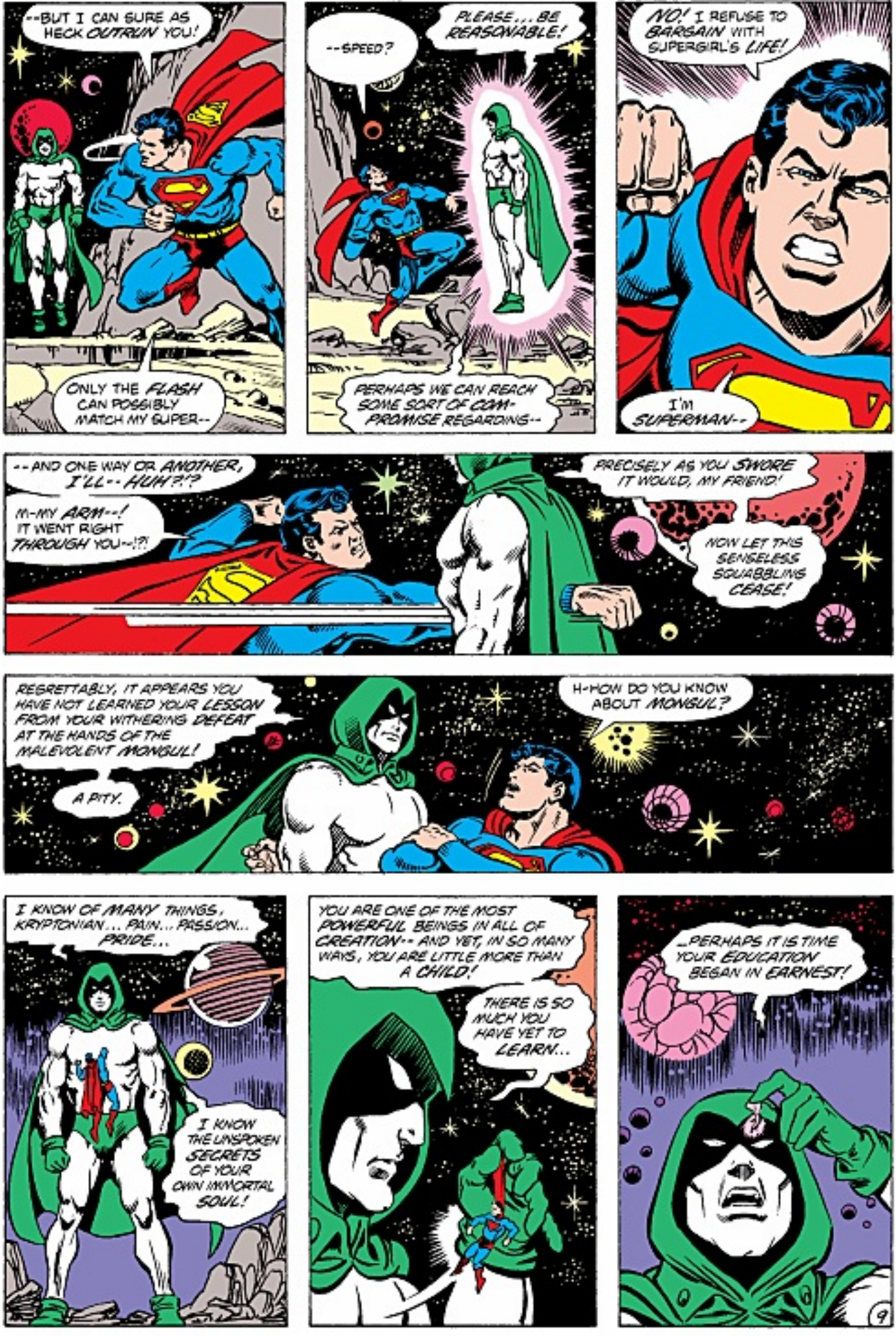
--AND YOUR INTERFERENCE HAS JUST MADE THAT JOB TWICE AS HARD AS IT WAS BE--
--EH?
I'M WARNING YOU, SUPERMAN-- STOP!

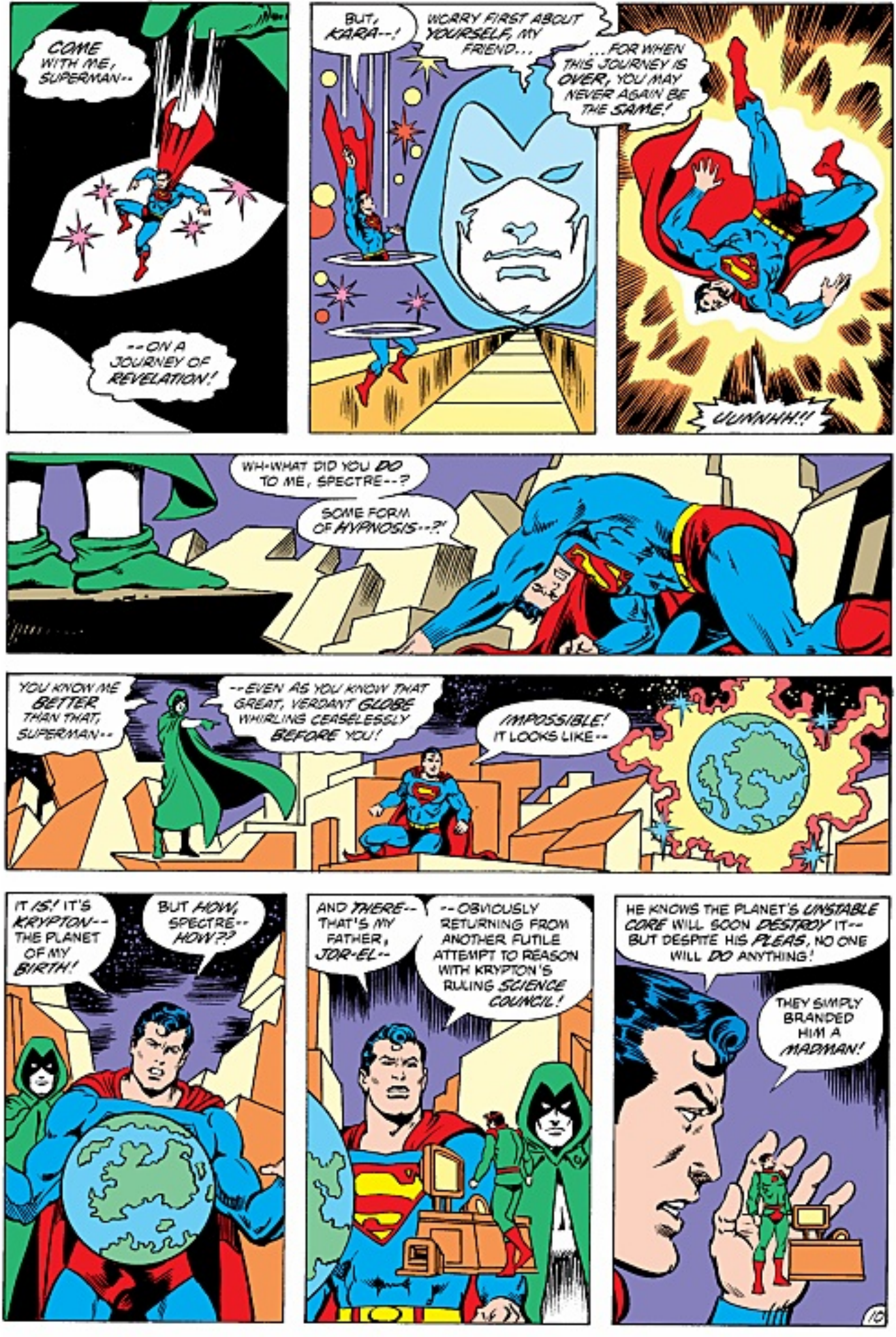
YOU'RE WARNING ME? JUST WHO MADE YOU BOSS AROUND HERE ANYWAY?
I BELIEVE YOU ALREADY KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT, MY FRIEND!

IF I TRULY AM YOUR FRIEND, SPECTRE-- YOU'LL GET OUT OF MY WAY!
REGRETTABLY... I CANNOT.

THEN I GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO MOVE YOU MYSELF!
IF THAT WILL EASE YOUR FRUSTRATION, SUPERMAN--
--YOU ARE MORE THAN WELCOME TO TRY!
7


I DISLIKE DOING THIS, SPECTRE -- WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE ON THE SAME SIDE -- BUT YOU'VE LEFT ME NO --
--HUH? YOU DIDN'T EVEN FLINCH!
WHY SHOULD I -- WHEN I FELT NOTHING?
TO ME, YOUR ANGRIEST BLOWS ARE NO MORE THAN THE WHISPER OF SNOWFLAKES!
YOU ARE POWERFUL, MY FRIEND -- BUT THE SPECTRE IS POWER INCARNATE!
I'M IMPRESSED --
--BUT THAT DOESN'T REALLY CHANGE ANYTHING!
YOU'RE STILL STANDING BETWEEN ME AND MY COUSIN -- AND UNLESS YOU LET ME BY YOU...
...I SWEAR I'LL GO RIGHT THROUGH YOU!!
THE SHEER FORCE OF THE BLOW IS AWESOME, SETTING THE NEARBY CLIFFS TO TREMBLING, AND OBSCURING ALL IN A MOMENTARY, BLINDING HAZE --
-- BUT WHEN THE DUST FROM THE IMPACT FINALLY SETTLES...
I CANNOT BE MOVED UNLESS I WISH TO BE!
I TRUST YOU'RE SATISFIED NOW, SUPERMAN?
OKAY -- YOU WIN! MAYBE I CAN'T OUTFIGHT YOU --
8


--BUT I CAN SURE AS HECK OUTRUN YOU!
ONLY THE FLASH CAN POSSIBLY MATCH MY SUPER--
--SPEED?
PLEASE... BE REASONABLE!
PERHAPS WE CAN REACH SOME SORT OF COMPROMISE REGARDING--
NO! I REFUSE TO BARGAIN WITH SUPERGIRL'S LIFE!
I'M SUPERMAN--
--AND ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, I'LL-- HUH?!?
M-MY ARM--! IT WENT RIGHT THROUGH YOU--!?!
PRECISELY AS YOU SWORE IT WOULD, MY FRIEND!
NOW LET THIS SENSELESS SQUABBLING CEASE!
REGRETTABLY, IT APPEARS YOU HAVE NOT LEARNED YOUR LESSON FROM YOUR WITHERING DEFEAT AT THE HANDS OF THE MALEVOLENT MONGUL!
A PITY.
H-HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MONGUL?
I KNOW OF MANY THINGS, KRYPTONIAN... PAIN... PASSION... PRIDE...
I KNOW THE UNSPOKEN SECRETS OF YOUR OWN IMMORTAL SOUL!
YOU ARE ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL BEINGS IN ALL OF CREATION-- AND YET, IN SO MANY WAYS, YOU ARE LITTLE MORE THAN A CHILD!
THERE IS SO MUCH YOU HAVE YET TO LEARN...
...PERHAPS IT IS TIME YOUR EDUCATION BEGAN IN EARNEST!
9


COME WITH ME, SUPERMAN--
--ON A JOURNEY OF REVELATION!
BUT, KARA--!
WORRY FIRST ABOUT YOURSELF, MY FRIEND...
...FOR WHEN THIS JOURNEY IS OVER, YOU MAY NEVER AGAIN BE THE SAME!
UUNNHH!!
WH-WHAT DID YOU DO TO ME, SPECTRE--?
SOME FORM OF HYPNOSIS--?!
YOU KNOW ME BETTER THAN THAT, SUPERMAN--
--EVEN AS YOU KNOW THAT GREAT, VERDANT GLOBE WHIRLING CEASELESSLY BEFORE YOU!
/MPOSSIBLE! IT LOOKS LIKE--
IT IS! IT'S KRYPTON--THE PLANET OF MY BIRTH!
BUT HOW, SPECTRE--HOW?!
AND THERE--THAT'S MY FATHER, JOR-EL--
--OBVIOUSLY RETURNING FROM ANOTHER FUTILE ATTEMPT TO REASON WITH KRYPTON'S RULING SCIENCE COUNCIL!
HE KNOWS THE PLANET'S UNSTABLE CORE WILL SOON DESTROY IT--BUT DESPITE HIS PLEAS, NO ONE WILL DO ANYTHING!
THEY SIMPLY BRANDED HIM A MADMAN!
10

OH, DAD--THE FRUSTRATION YOU MUST HAVE FELT--BEING ASSURED AS KRYPTON MARCHED RELENTLESSLY TOWARD ITS DOOM...
FINALLY, IN DESPERATION, MY FATHER LAUNCHED AN EXPERIMENTAL ROCKET BOUND FOR EARTH...
...A ROCKET CONTAINING HIS ONLY SON...
...ME.
THEN, AS THE ROCKET DISAPPEARED AMONG THE STARS, MY FATHER--AND MY SWEET MOTHER, LARA--EMBRACED ONE ANOTHER...
...AND WAITED FOR THE END!
BUT WHAT'S THE POINT OF ALL THIS, SPECTRE? WHY TORMENT ME THIS WAY?
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU WITNESSED THIS SCENE BEFORE, MY FRIEND?
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU USED YOUR SUPER-POWERS TO TRAVEL INTO THE PAST--
--TO PREVENT THE DESTRUCTION OF YOUR NATIVE WORLD--
--AND HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU FAILED?
TOO MANY!
BUT YOU'VE GIVEN ME ANOTHER CHANCE, SPECTRE--
--AND THIS TIME THE END WILL BE DIFFERENT!
KRYPTON WILL NOT DIE AGAIN!
NOT THIS TIME!
NOT THIS--

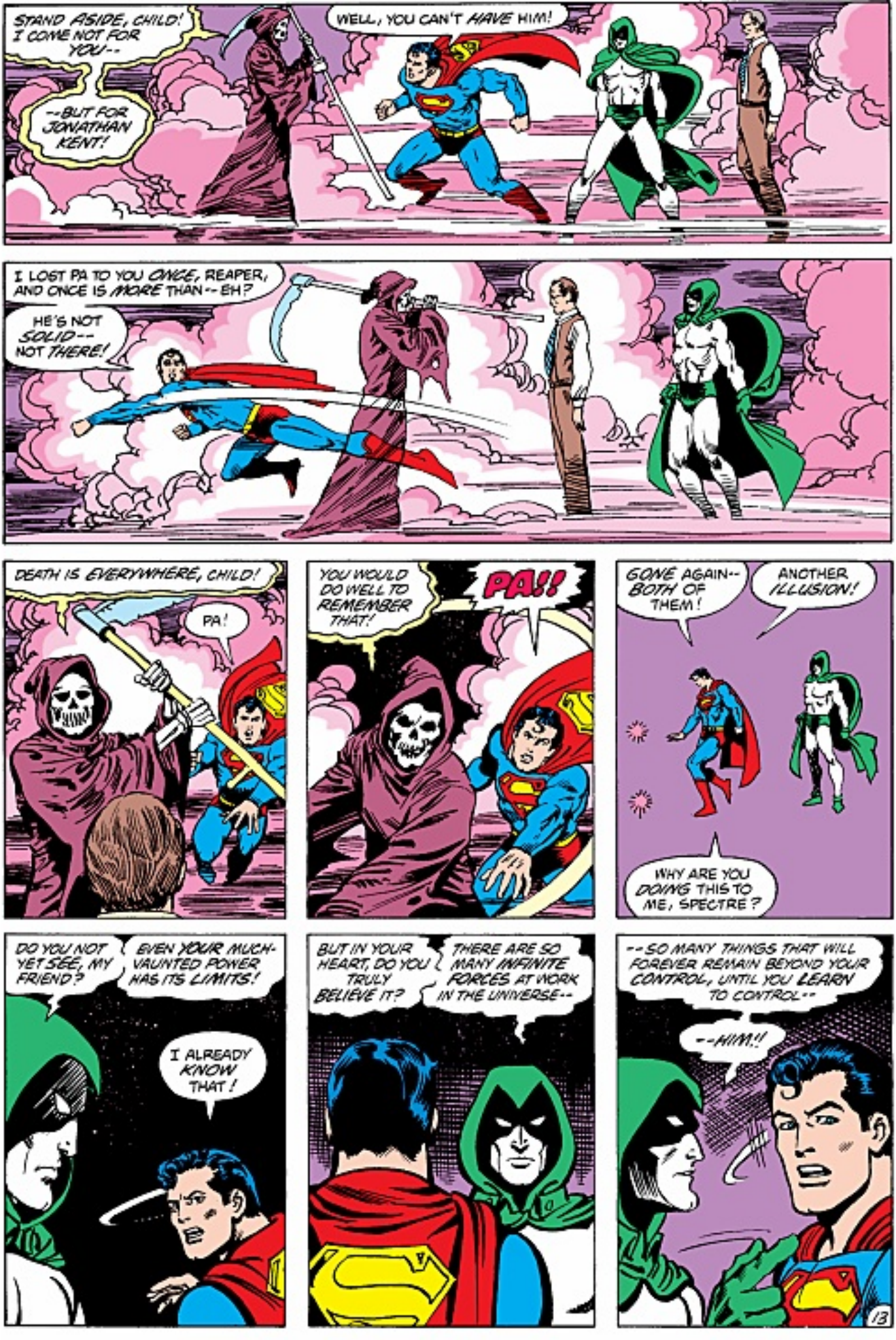
KWA-VA-VOOM!
NOOOOOOO

IT'S GONE-- REDUCED TO COSMIC DUST!
NOT ALL MY POWER COULD SAVE IT!
TRAGIC, SUPERMAN-- BUT TRUE!
AND YET, YOU MAY STILL FIND SOME SOLACE IN YOUR PAST!
BEHOLD!

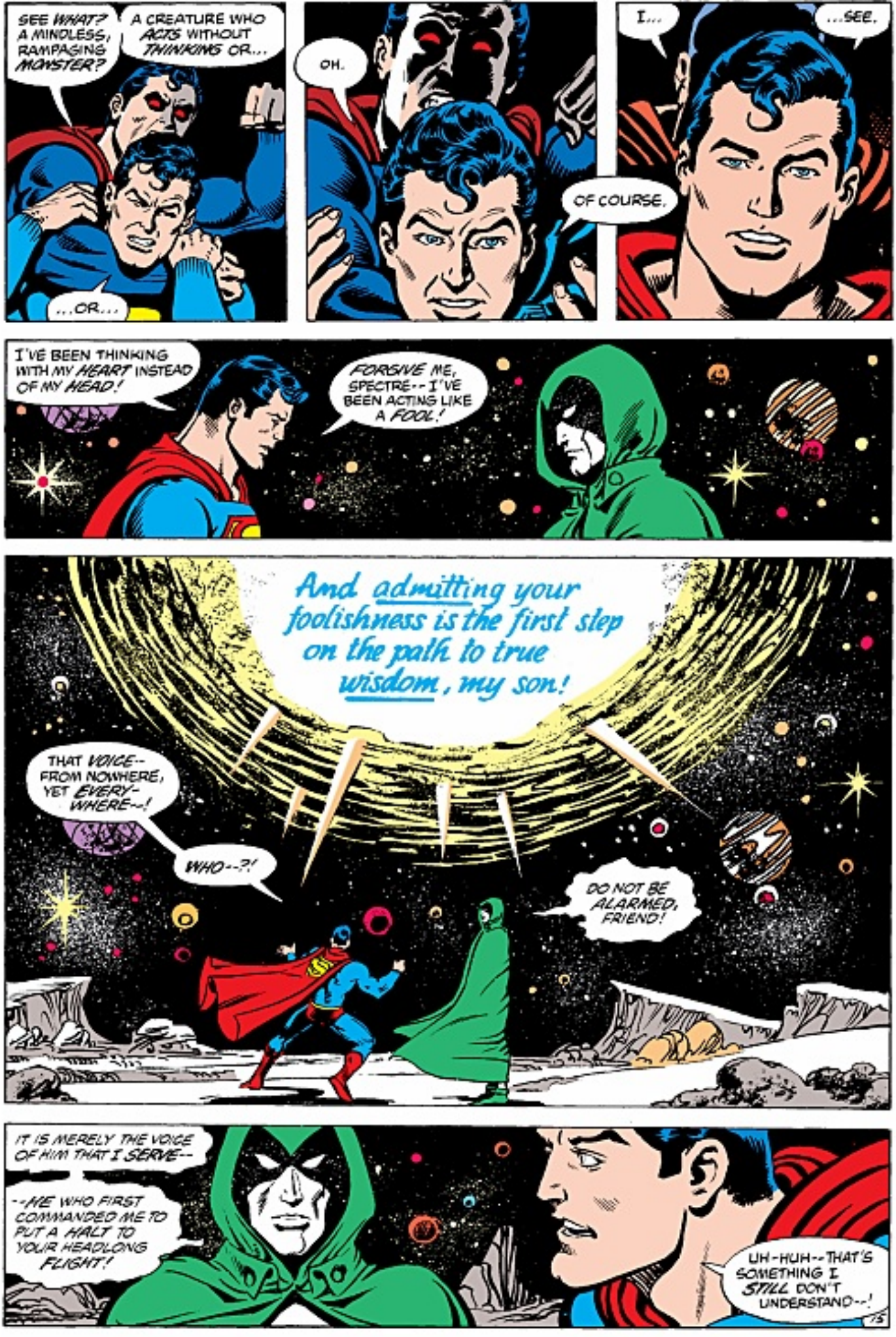
NO! IT'S JONATHAN KENT-- THE EARTHMAN WHO ADOPTED ME-- RAISED ME AS HIS SON!
HE TAUGHT ME HONOR... MORALITY... A SENSE OF JUSTICE...
SPECTRE, WHAT IS HE DOING HERE?

WHAT MATTERS IS NOT THAT HE IS HERE, MY FRIEND--
-- BUT THAT HE DID NOT COME ALONE!
NO...NOT HIM.

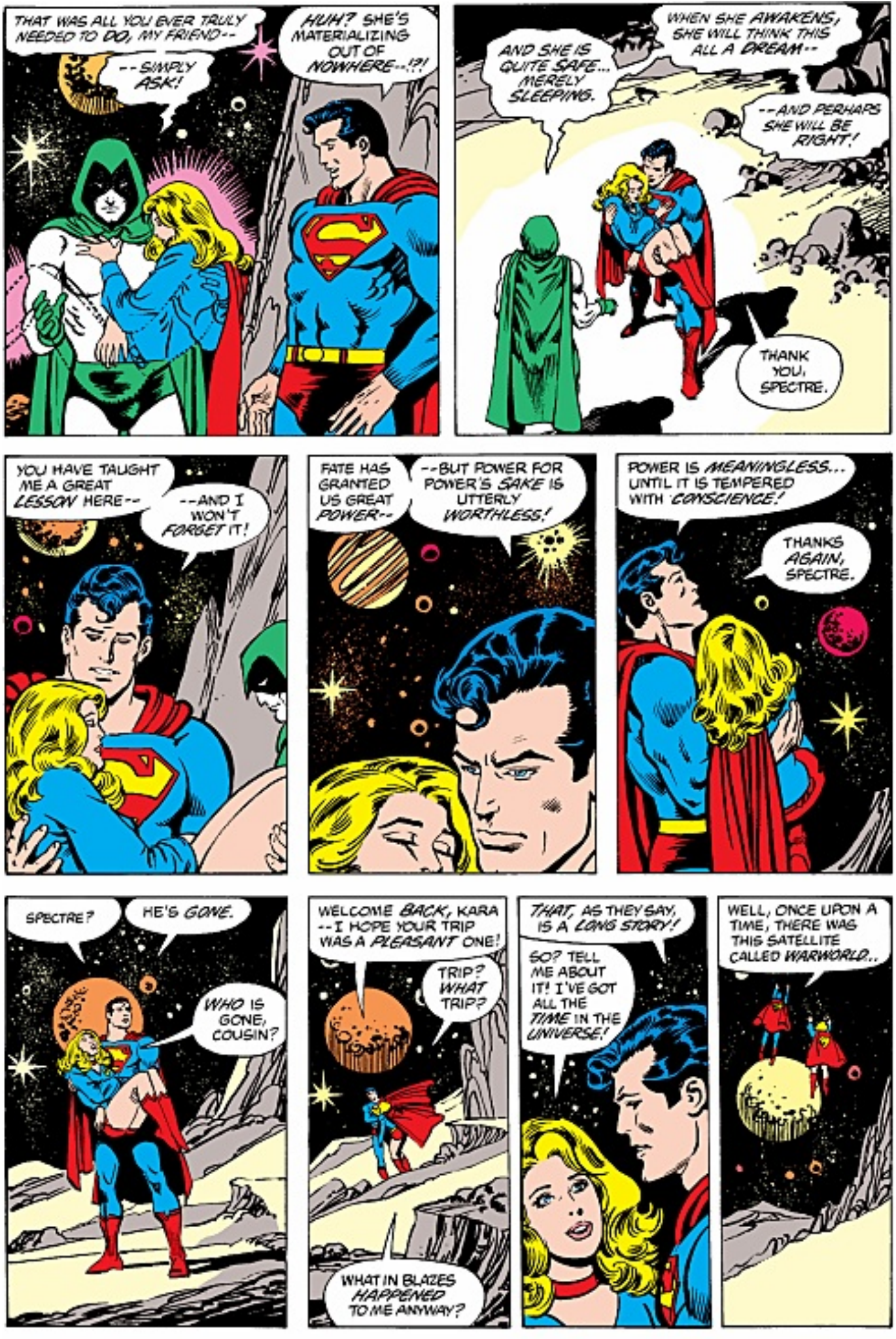
WHY MUST THE GRIM REAPER HAUNT ME WHEREVER I GO?
12


STAND ASIDE, CHILD! I COME NOT FOR YOU--
--BUT FOR JONATHAN KENT!
WELL, YOU CAN'T HAVE HIM!
I LOST PA TO YOU ONCE, REAPER, AND ONCE IS MORE THAN -- EH?
HE'S NOT SOLID -- NOT THERE!
DEATH IS EVERYWHERE, CHILD!
PA!
YOU WOULD DO WELL TO REMEMBER THAT!
PA!!
GONE AGAIN -- BOTH OF THEM!
ANOTHER ILLUSION!
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS TO ME, SPECTRE?
DO YOU NOT YET SEE, MY FRIEND?
EVEN YOUR MUCH-VAUNTED POWER HAS ITS LIMITS!
I ALREADY KNOW THAT!
BUT IN YOUR HEART, DO YOU TRULY BELIEVE IT?
THERE ARE SO MANY INFINITE FORCES AT WORK IN THE UNIVERSE--
--SO MANY THINGS THAT WILL FOREVER REMAIN BEYOND YOUR CONTROL, UNTIL YOU LEARN TO CONTROL--
--HIM!!
13

I TRUST YOU RECOGNIZE HIM, SUPERMAN-- FOR HE IS THE DARK SIDE OF YOUR OWN SPIRIT!
HE IS THAT CAPACITY FOR VIOLENCE THAT DWELLS WITHIN ALL BEINGS, GIVEN SUM AND FORM!
UUNNHH!!
FEEL HIS TERRIBLE TOUCH, MY FRIEND-- AND KNOW HIM FOR WHAT HE IS...
...PURE, UNADULTERATED POWER, WITHOUT REIN, WITHOUT RESTRICTION...
...WITHOUT CONSCIENCE OR REMORSE...
...POWER THAT CAN ULTIMATELY DESTROY YOU...
...IF YOU ALLOW IT TO RUN AMOK!
H-HE'S... CHOKING THE LIFE... OUT OF ME ..
HOW CAN I STOP HIM, SPECTRE?
THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY, MY FRIEND...
YOU MUST OPEN YOUR EYES...
...AND SEE.

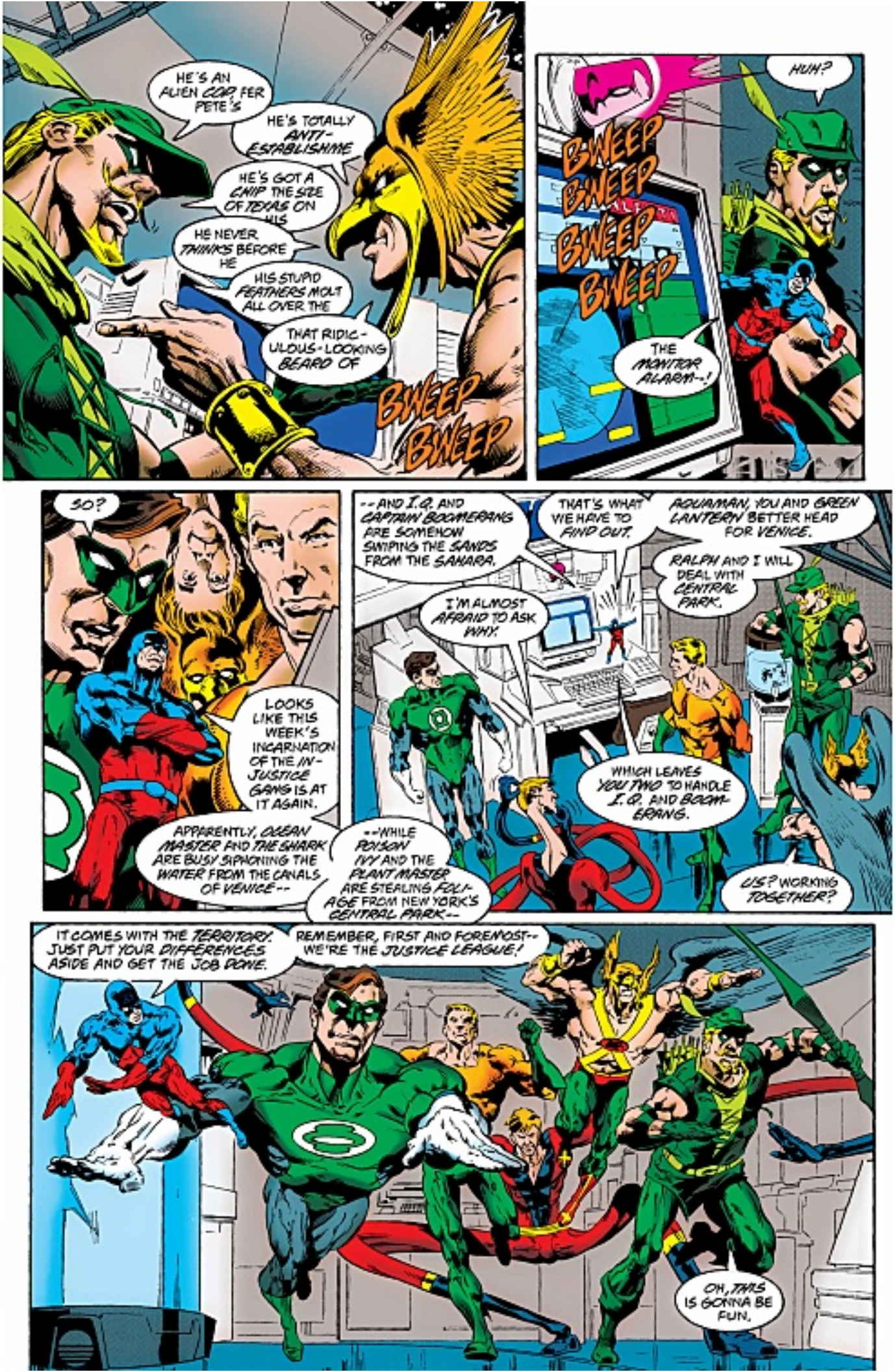

SEE WHAT? A MINDLESS, RAMPAGING MONSTER?
A CREATURE WHO ACTS WITHOUT THINKING OR...
...OR...
OH.
OF COURSE.
I...
...SEE.
I'VE BEEN THINKING WITH MY HEART INSTEAD OF MY HEAD!
FORGIVE ME, SPECTRE--I'VE BEEN ACTING LIKE A FOOL!
And admitting your foolishness is the first step on the path to true wisdom, my son!
THAT VOICE--FROM NOWHERE, YET EVERY-WHERE--!
WHO--?!
DO NOT BE ALARMED, FRIEND!
IT IS MERELY THE VOICE OF HIM THAT I SERVE--
--HE WHO FIRST COMMANDED ME TO PUT A HALT TO YOUR HEADLONG FLIGHT!
UH-HUH--THAT'S SOMETHING I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND--!

WHY DID YOU STOP ME, SPECTRE? I MEANT NO HARM HERE!
I KNOW YOU ONLY MEANT TO SAVE YOUR COUSIN--
-- AND YET, BY PURSUING HER, YOU RISKED THE ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION OF CIVILIZATIONS BEYOND NUMBERING!
HOW SO?
-- SHATTERING BARRIER AFTER BARRIER UNTIL ONLY ONE REMAINED...
YOU WERE TRAVELING FAR FASTER THAN YOU EVER HAD BEFORE, MY FRIEND--
...THAT GOLDEN VEIL BEYOND WHICH NO LIVING MAN MAY TRESPASS!
NO LIVING...?
SWEET STARS, YOU DON'T MEAN...
...DO YOU?
Aye, my good and faithful son, know your heart speaks true -- and rejoice!
BUT WHAT ABOUT KARA?
PLEASE -- YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME SAVE MY COUSIN SUPERGIRL!
16

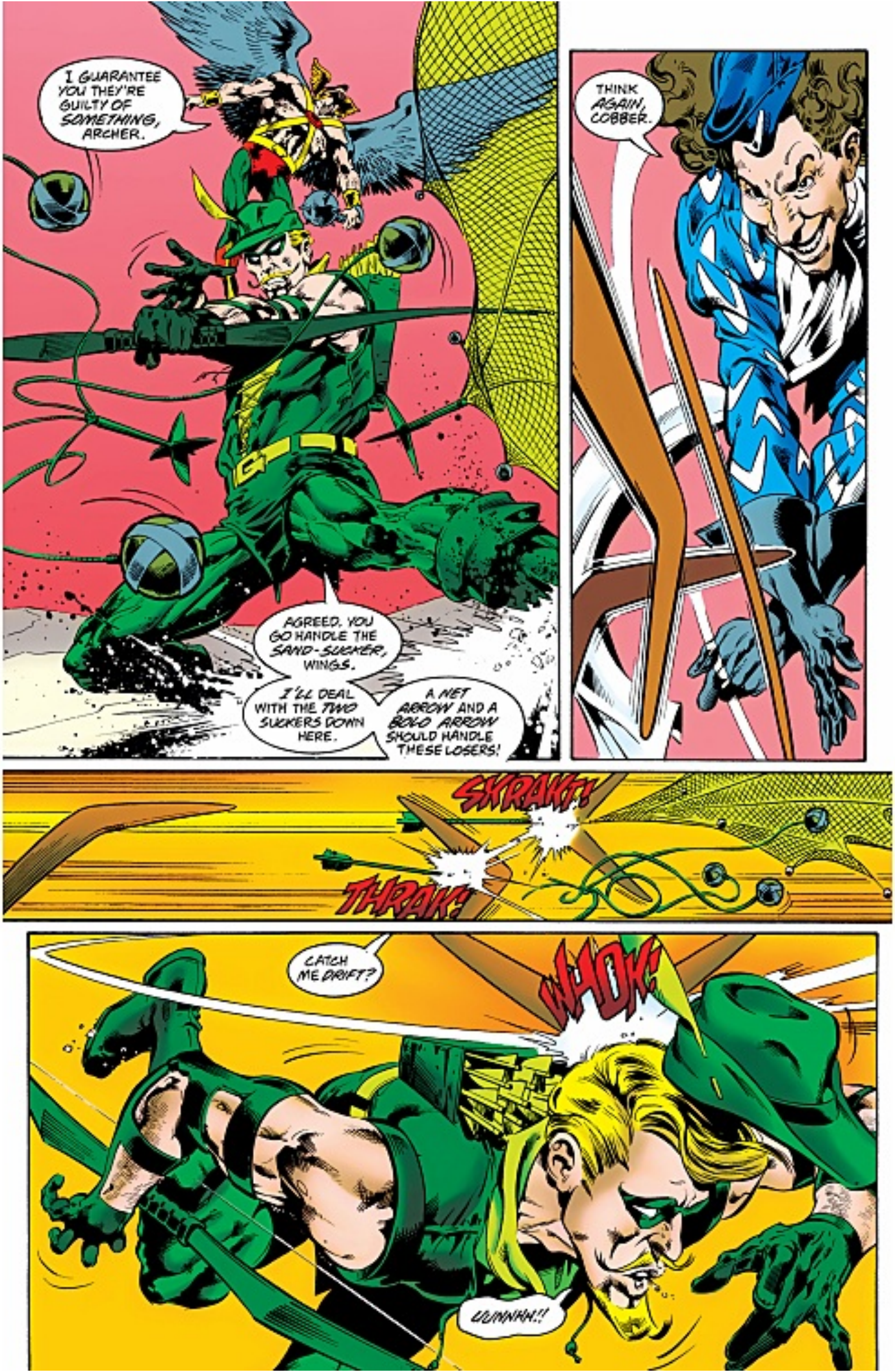

THAT WAS ALL YOU EVER TRULY NEEDED TO DO, MY FRIEND--
--SIMPLY ASK!
HUH? SHE'S MATERIALIZING OUT OF NOWHERE--!?!
AND SHE IS QUITE SAFE... MERELY SLEEPING.
WHEN SHE AWAKENS, SHE WILL THINK THIS ALL A DREAM--
--AND PERHAPS SHE WILL BE RIGHT!
THANK YOU, SPECTRE.
YOU HAVE TAUGHT ME A GREAT LESSON HERE--
--AND I WON'T FORGET IT!
FATE HAS GRANTED US GREAT POWER--
--BUT POWER FOR POWER'S SAKE IS UTTERLY WORTHLESS!
POWER IS MEANINGLESS... UNTIL IT IS TEMPERED WITH CONSCIENCE!
THANKS AGAIN, SPECTRE.
SPECTRE?
HE'S GONE.
WHO IS GONE, COUSIN?
WELCOME BACK, KARA --I HOPE YOUR TRIP WAS A PLEASANT ONE!
TRIP? WHAT TRIP?
WHAT IN BLAZES HAPPENED TO ME ANYWAY?
THAT, AS THEY SAY, IS A LONG STORY!
SO? TELL ME ABOUT IT! I'VE GOT ALL THE TIME IN THE UNIVERSE!
WELL, ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS THIS SATELLITE CALLED WARWORLD..

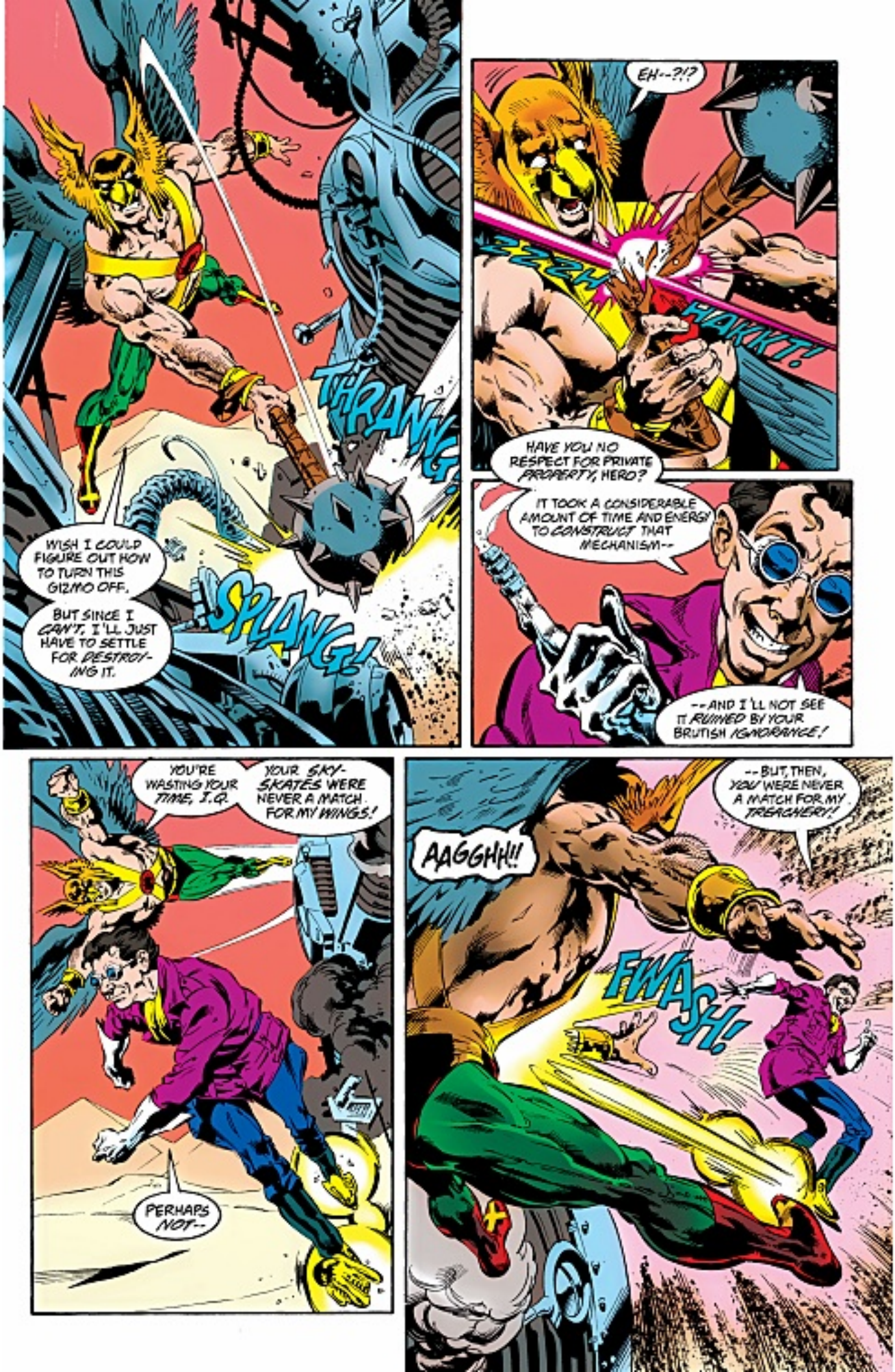
THE LEGENDARY SATELLITE HEADQUARTERS OF THE EQUALLY LEGENDARY JUSTICE LEAGUE, IN GEOSYNCHRONOUS ORBIT 22,300 MILES ABOVE THE EARTH...
AND HERE HE IS, LADIES AND GERMS--
--LIVING PROOF PIGS HAVE FINALLY LEARNED HOW TO FLY!
THAT'S IT, ARCHER!
THAT'S JUST ABOUT ALL I'M OBLIGED TO TAKE FROM YOU!
YOU WANT A PIECE OF ME, BIRDBEAK--
--COME TRY AND TAKE IT!
IT WILL BE MY PLEASURE!
WHOA! EASY, FELLAS!
COOL YOUR JETS!
The ROLL CALL
AQUAMAN
ATOM
ELONGATED MAN
GREEN ARROW
GREEN LANTERN
HAWKMAN
"WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE...!"
LEN WEIN- WRITER
SAL VELLUTO- PENCILLER
BOB ALMOND- INKER
ALBIE DEGUZMAN- LETTERER
RICK TAYLOR- COLORIST

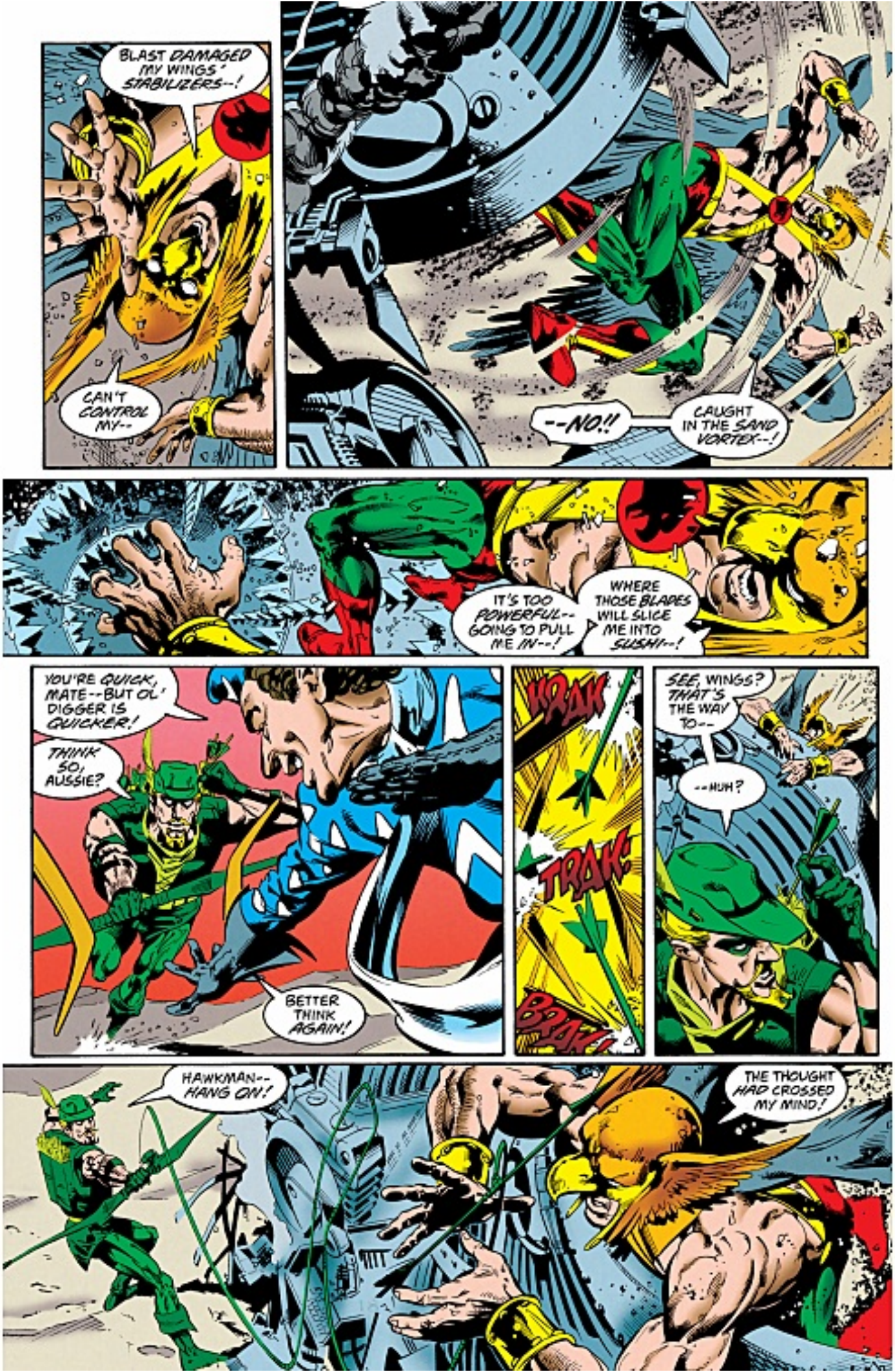
OKAY, THAT'S ENOUGH!
I WON'T HAVE ANY BRAWLING AROUND HERE WHILE I'M THE DESIGNATED CHAIRMAN.
BUT HE STARTED--
I MEAN IT.
CALM. DOWN.
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT... WE'RE CALM.
YOU'RE SURE?
CLOSE ENOUGH.
YOU CAN BACK OFF NOW, PAL.
SO EXACTLY WHAT IS IT WITH YOU TWO ANYWAY? YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE TEAMMATES--!
YOU ACT LIKE YOU'RE ARCH-ENEMIES!
LOOK, JUST BECAUSE I WORK WITH THE GUY DOESN'T MEAN I HAVE TO LIKE HIM.
THE FEELING IS ENTIRELY MUTUAL.
BUT WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE?
ARE YOU SERIOUS?


HE'S AN ALIEN COP, FER PETE'S
HE'S TOTALLY ANTI-ESTABLISHME
HE'S GOT A CHIP THE SIZE OF TEXAS ON HIS
HE NEVER THINKS BEFORE HE
HIS STUPID FEATHERS MOLT ALL OVER THE
THAT RIDIC-ULOUS-LOOKING BEARD OF
BWEEP BWEEP
HUH?
BWEEP BWEEP BWEEP BWEEP
THE MONITOR ALARM--!
SO?
LOOKS LIKE THIS WEEK'S INCARNATION OF THE INJUSTICE GANG IS AT IT AGAIN.
APPARENTLY, OCEAN MASTER AND THE SHARK ARE BUSY SIPHONING THE WATER FROM THE CANALS OF VENICE--
--WHILE POISON IVY AND THE PLANT MASTER ARE STEALING FOLIAGE FROM NEW YORK'S CENTRAL PARK--
--AND I.Q. AND CAPTAIN BOOMERANG ARE SOMEHOW SWIPING THE SANDS FROM THE SAHARA.
I'M ALMOST AFRAID TO ASK WHY.
THAT'S WHAT WE HAVE TO FIND OUT.
AQUAMAN, YOU AND GREEN LANTERN BETTER HEAD FOR VENICE.
RALPH AND I WILL DEAL WITH CENTRAL PARK.
WHICH LEAVES YOU TWO TO HANDLE I.Q. AND BOOMERANG.
US? WORKING TOGETHER?
IT COMES WITH THE TERRITORY. JUST PUT YOUR DIFFERENCES ASIDE AND GET THE JOB DONE.
REMEMBER, FIRST AND FOREMOST-- WE'RE THE JUSTICE LEAGUE!
OH, THIS IS GONNA BE FUN.

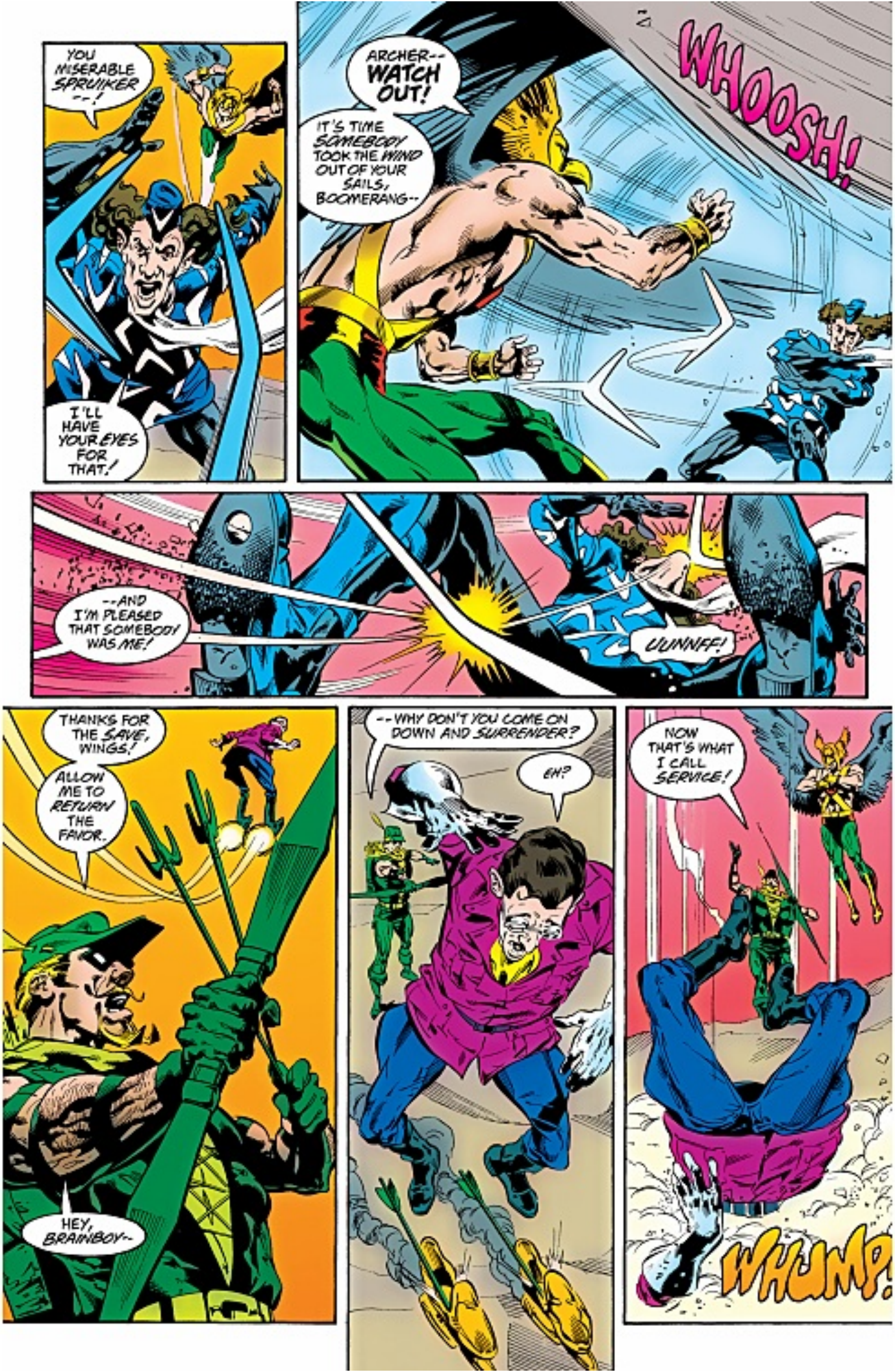
AND, WHILE AQUAMAN, ATOM, ELONGATED MAN AND GREEN LANTERN RACE OFF TO THEIR OWN DRAMATIC ENCOUNTERS, LET US TURN OUR ATTENTION TO EGYPT, WHERE TWO OF THE INFAMOUS INJUSTICE GANG ARE ALREADY MAKING MADNESS..
ONE IS IRA QUIMBY, KNOWN FOR HIS OCCASIONAL FLASHES OF SUPER-HUMAN BRILLIANCE AS I.Q.
THE OTHER IS GEORGE "DAGGER" HARKNESS, KNOWN FOR FAR MORE OBVIOUS REASONS AS CAPTAIN BOOMERANG.
GOTTA HAND T' OL' MAJOR DISASTER, MATE--
--THAT SAND-SUCKER OF HIS IS DOIN' THE JOB UP RIGHT.
THANKS IN NO SMALL PART TO MY GENIUS--AND THE MANY IMPROVEMENTS IT ENABLED US TO INCORPORATE.
WELL, YOU CAN PAT YOURSELF ON THE BACK WHILE YOU'RE SITTING BEHIND BARS, QUIMBY--
--BECAUSE THAT'S JUST WHERE THE TWO OF YOU ARE GOING!
WHO--?!?
WHO ELSE? ONE IS THE ACE ARCHER AND REBEL WITH A CAUSE..
WHILE THE OTHER IS THE LEGENDARY LAWMAN FROM THE DISTANT PLANET THANAGAR..
I MEAN, THERE HAS TO BE SOME KINDA LAW AGAINST STEALING THE SAHARA DESERT..
...DOESN'T THERE?

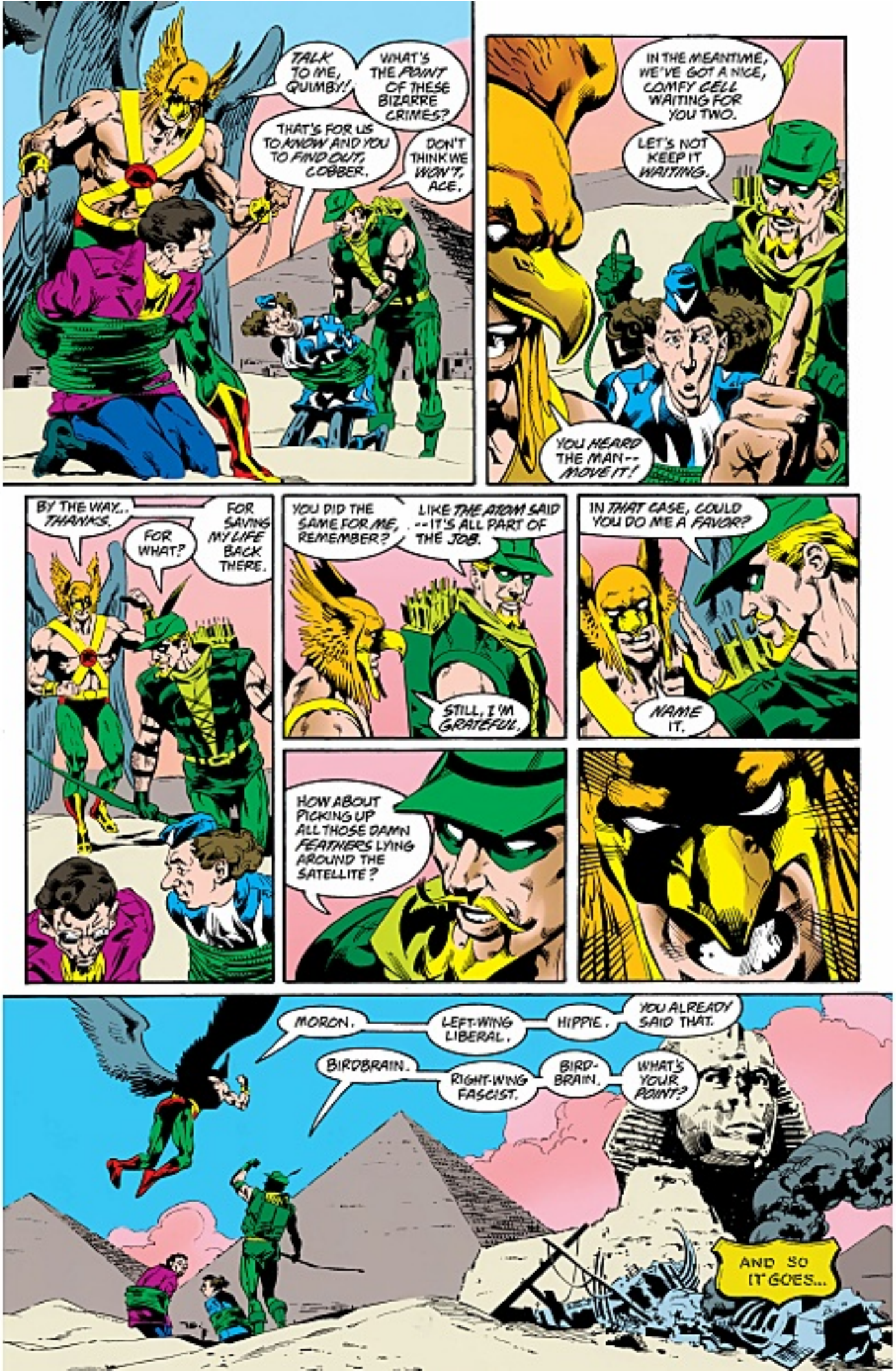

I GUARANTEE YOU THEY'RE GUILTY OF SOMETHING, ARCHER.
AGREED. YOU GO HANDLE THE SAND-SUCKER, WINGS.
I'LL DEAL WITH THE TWO SUCKERS DOWN HERE.
A NET ARROW AND A BOLO ARROW SHOULD HANDLE THESE LOSERS!
THINK AGAIN, COBBER.
SKRAK!
THRAK!
CATCH ME DRIFT?
WHOK!
UUHHH!!

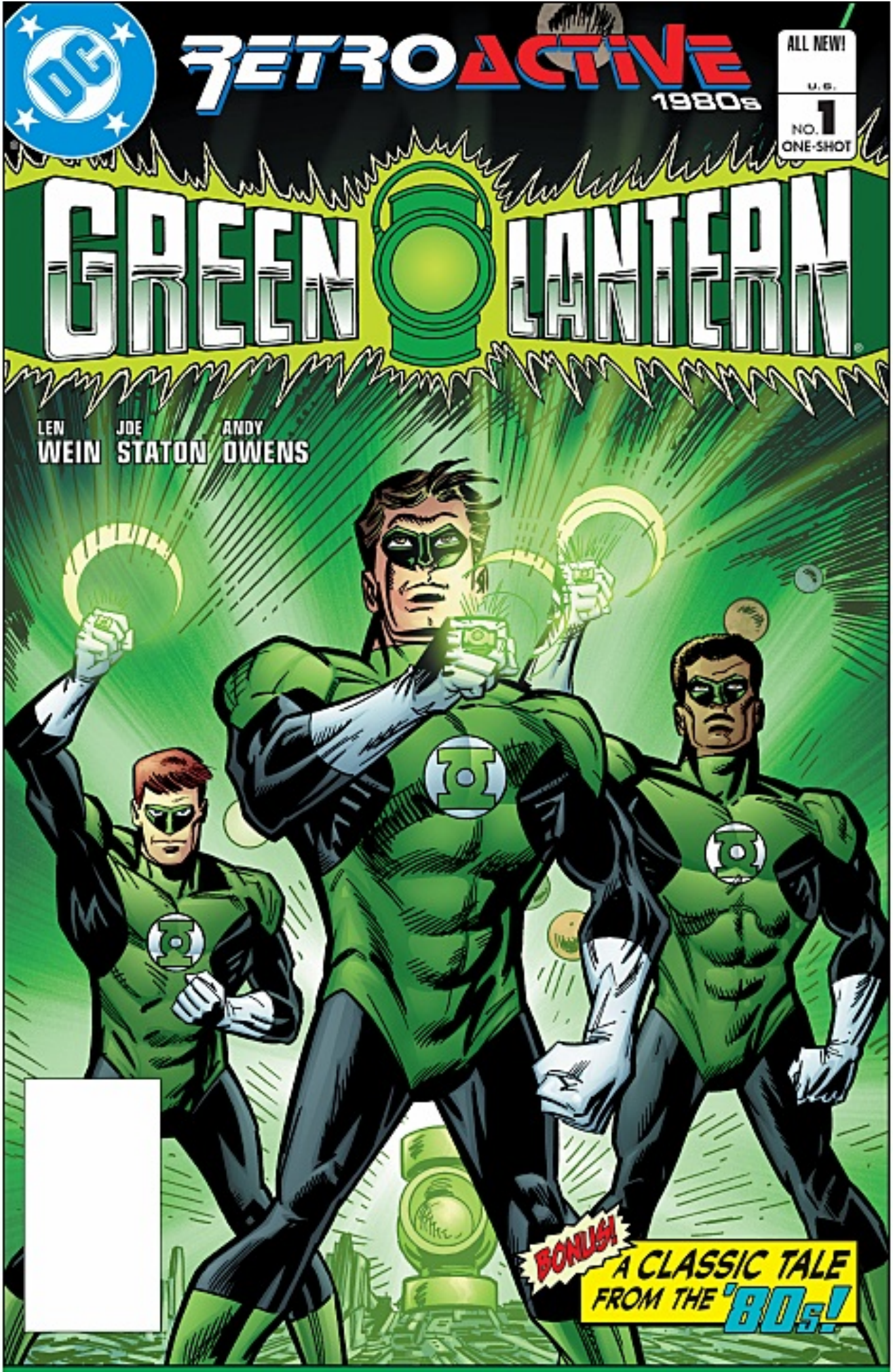

WISH I COULD FIGURE OUT HOW TO TURN THIS GIZMO OFF.
BUT SINCE I CAN'T, I'LL JUST HAVE TO SETTLE FOR DESTROYING IT.
THRANG!
SPLANG!
EH--?!?
ZZZAH
HAKKT!
HAVE YOU NO RESPECT FOR PRIVATE PROPERTY, HERO?
IT TOOK A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF TIME AND ENERGY TO CONSTRUCT THAT MECHANISM--
--AND I'LL NOT SEE IT RUINED BY YOUR BRUTISH IGNORANCE!
YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME, J.Q.
YOUR SKY-SKATES WERE NEVER A MATCH FOR MY WINGS!
PERHAPS NOT--
AAGGHH!!
--BUT, THEN, YOU WERE NEVER A MATCH FOR MY TREACHERY!
FWASH!


BLAST DAMAGED MY WINGS' STABILIZERS--!
CAN'T CONTROL MY--
--NO!!
CAUGHT IN THE SAND VORTEX--!
IT'S TOO POWERFUL-- GOING TO PULL ME IN--!
WHERE THOSE BLADES WILL SLICE ME INTO SUSHI--!
YOU'RE QUICK, MATE--BUT OL' DIGGER IS QUICKER!
THINK SO, AUSSIE?
BETTER THINK AGAIN!
KRAK
TRAK
BRAK
SEE, WINGS? THAT'S THE WAY TO--
--HUH?
HAWKMAN-- HANG ON!
THE THOUGHT HAD CROSSED MY MIND!

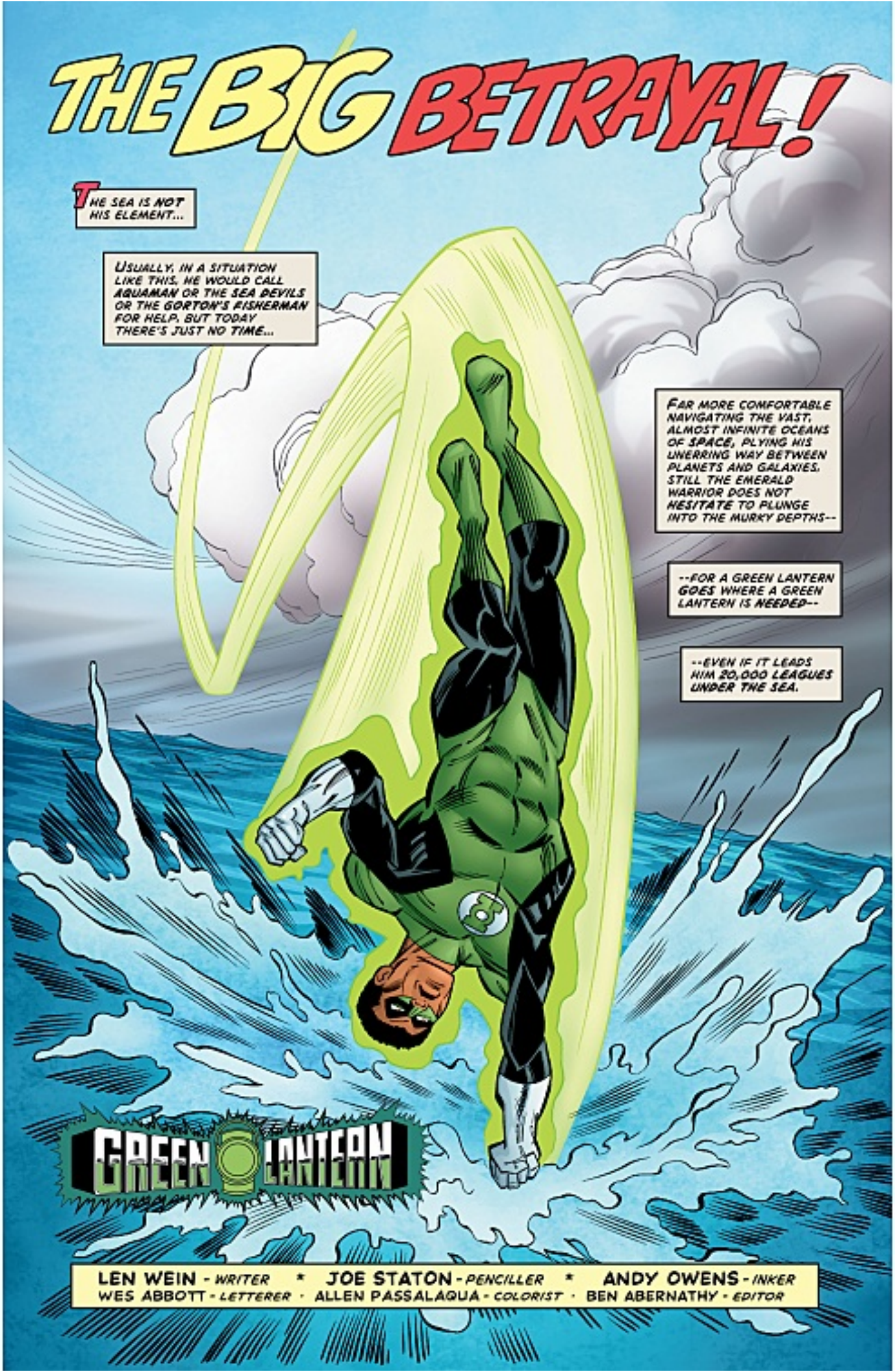
LET GO, ARCHER--BEFORE IT SUCKS US BOTH IN!
THE PULL IS TOO STRONG--! WINCH ISN'T WORKING--!
IN A MOMENT, IT WON'T MATTER, COBBER--
--ONCE MY EXPLOSIVE BOOMERANG BLOWS YOU BOTH TO--
--NO!!
SLOW LEARNER, AIN'T YA, AUSSIE?
PLAYING AGAINST ME ON YOUR BEST DAY--
--YOU'RE STILL PLAYING WAY OUT OF YOUR LEAGUE!
WHA WHOOM!
UUNHHH!!
HHUNNFF!!


YOU MISERABLE SPRUIKER --!
I'LL HAVE YOUR EYES FOR THAT!
ARCHER-- WATCH OUT!
IT'S TIME SOMEBODY TOOK THE WIND OUT OF YOUR SAILS, BOOMERANG--
WHOOSH!
--AND I'M PLEASED THAT SOMEBODY WAS ME!
UUNNFF!
THANKS FOR THE SAVE, WINGS!
ALLOW ME TO RETURN THE FAVOR.
HEY, BRAINBOY--
--WHY DON'T YOU COME ON DOWN AND SURRENDER?
EH?
NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL SERVICE!
WHUMP!


TALK TO ME, QUIMBY!
WHAT'S THE POINT OF THESE BIZARRE CRIMES?
THAT'S FOR US TO KNOW AND YOU TO FIND OUT, COBBER.
DON'T THINK WE WON'T, ACE.
IN THE MEANTIME, WE'VE GOT A NICE, COMFY CELL WAITING FOR YOU TWO.
LET'S NOT KEEP IT WAITING.
YOU HEARD THE MAN-- MOVE IT!
BY THE WAY... THANKS.
FOR WHAT?
FOR SAVING MY LIFE BACK THERE.
YOU DID THE SAME FOR ME, REMEMBER?
LIKE THE ATOM SAID --IT'S ALL PART OF THE JOB.
STILL, I'M GRATEFUL.
IN THAT CASE, COULD YOU DO ME A FAVOR?
NAME IT.
HOW ABOUT PICKING UP ALL THOSE DAMN FEATHERS LYING AROUND THE SATELLITE?
MORON.
LEFT-WING LIBERAL.
HIPPIE.
YOU ALREADY SAID THAT.
BIRDBRAIN.
RIGHT-WING FASCIST.
BIRD-BRAIN.
WHAT'S YOUR POINT?
AND SO IT GOES...

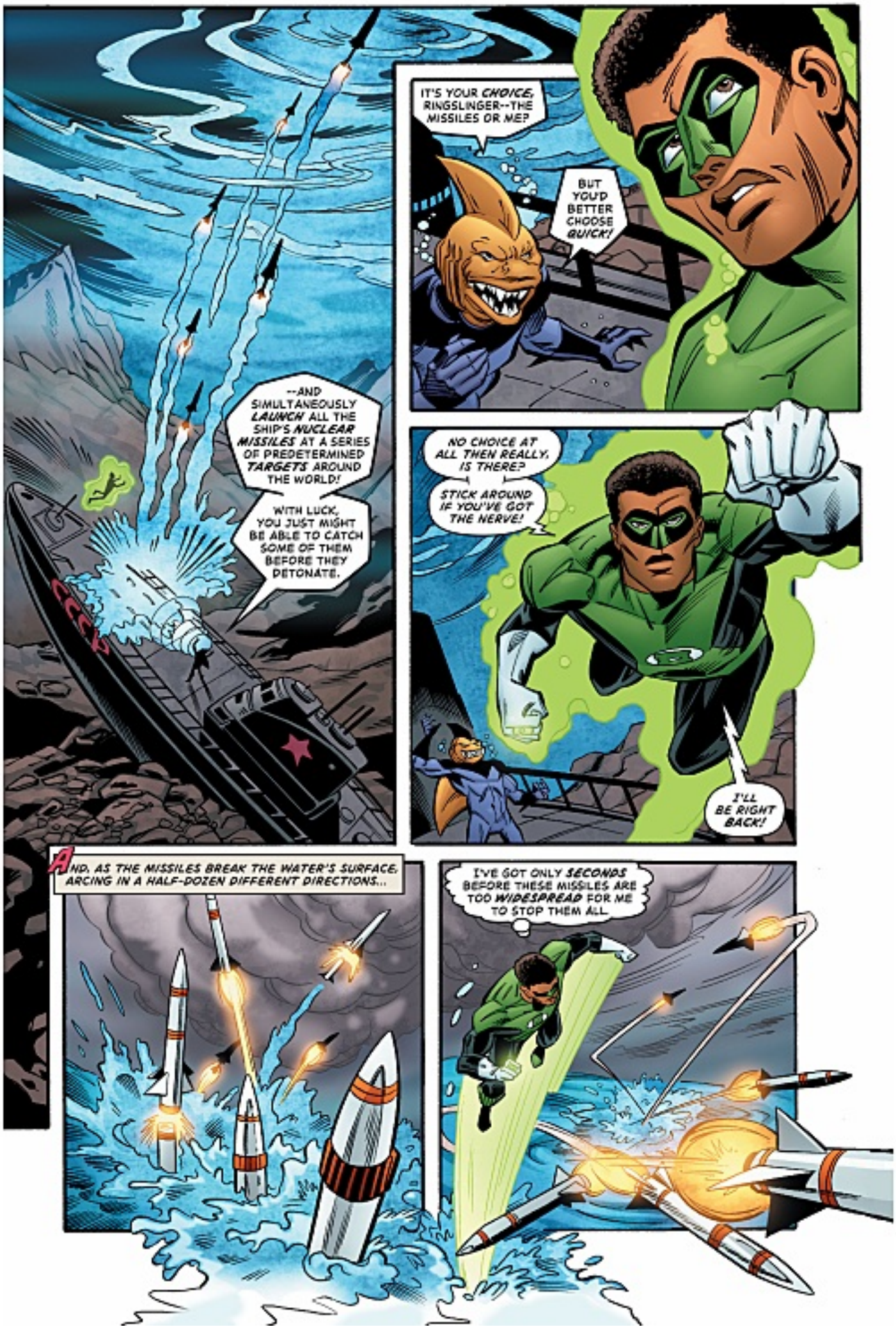


Cover for **DC RETROACTIVE: GREEN LANTERN—THE '80S #1** (2011)
Art by Joe Staton


THE BIG BETRAYAL!
THE SEA IS NOT HIS ELEMENT...
USUALLY, IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS, HE WOULD CALL AQUAMAN OR THE SEA DEVILS OR THE GORTON'S FISHERMAN FOR HELP. BUT TODAY THERE'S JUST NO TIME...
FAR MORE COMFORTABLE NAVIGATING THE VAST, ALMOST INFINITE OCEANS OF SPACE, PLYING HIS UNERRING WAY BETWEEN PLANETS AND GALAXIES. STILL THE EMERALD WARRIOR DOES NOT HESITATE TO PLUNGE INTO THE MURKY DEPTHS--
--FOR A GREEN LANTERN GOES WHERE A GREEN LANTERN IS NEEDED--
--EVEN IF IT LEADS HIM 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA.
GREEN LANTERN
LEN WEIN - WRITER * JOE STATON - PENCILLER * ANDY OWENS - INKER
WES ABBOTT - LETTERER · ALLEN PASSALAQUA - COLORIST · BEN ABERNATHY - EDITOR

POWER RING WILL PROVIDE ME WITH ALL THE OXYGEN I MAY NEED--
--AS WELL AS PROTECT ME FROM THE PRESSURE OF THE DEPTHS AND NITROGEN NARCOSIS...
AND A LITTLE OLD-FASHIONED SONAR SHOULD HELP POINT ME TO MY QUARRY!
YEP. THERE HE IS!
HIDING IN A TRENCH AT THE OCEAN'S BOTTOM.
THE SHEER WATER PRESSURE DOWN THERE ALONE WILL BE ALMOST INDESCRIBABLE--
--BUT IF HE'S COUNTING ON THAT KEEPING ME AWAY--
--HE DOESN'T KNOW WHO HE'S UP AGAINST!
HELLO...

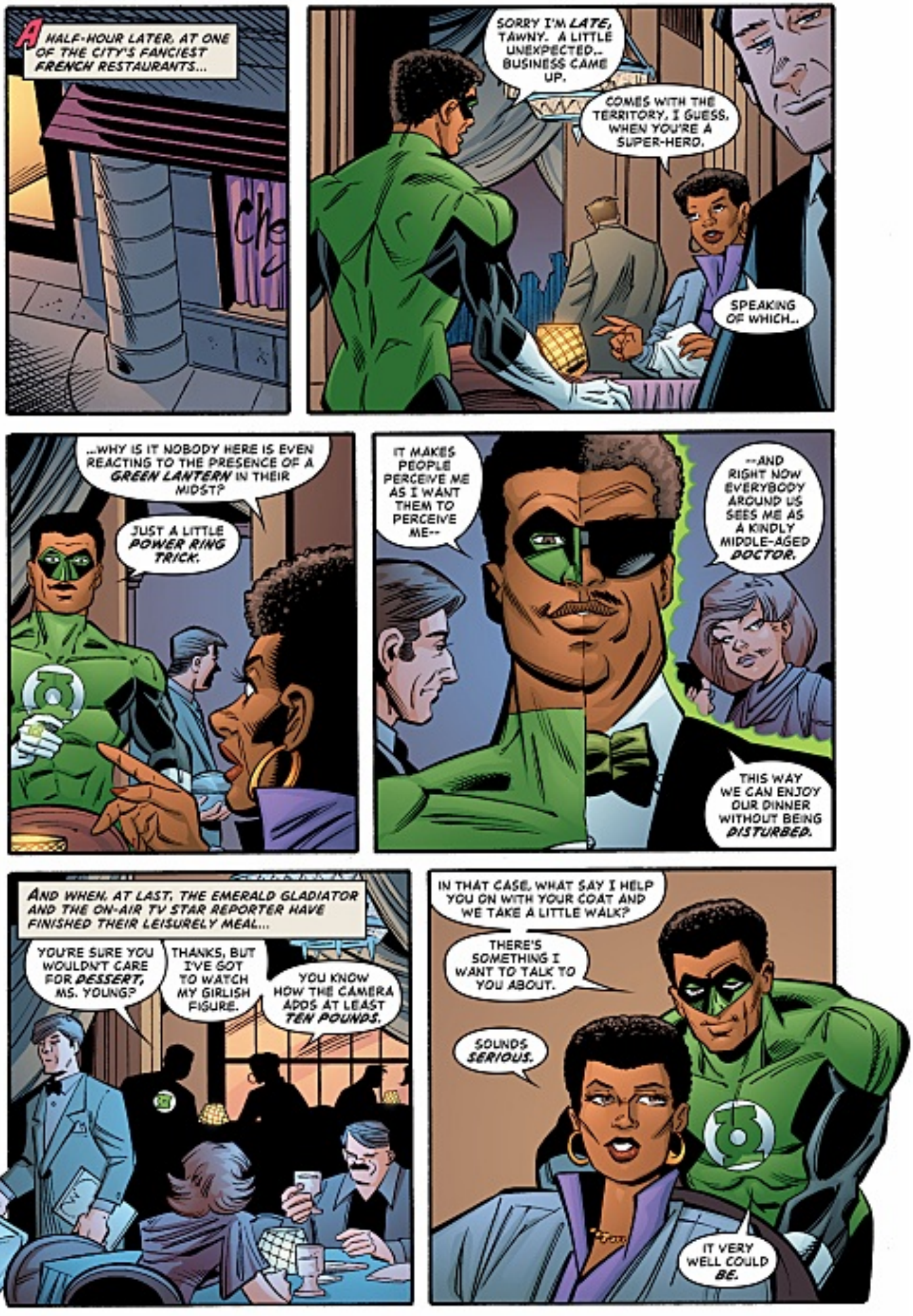
...SHARK!
YOU ARE NOT THE GREEN LANTERN I HAVE FACED BEFORE.
YOUR SCENT IS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT.
BUT MY PURPOSE REMAINS THE SAME--TO PUT AN END TO YOU!
YOU ARE MORE THAN WELCOME TO TRY, HUMAN--
--BUT THIS TIME I AM HOLDING THE TRUMP CARD!
HIJACKING A RUSSIAN NUCLEAR SUBMARINE DOESN'T GIVE YOU THE EDGE YOU THINK IT DOES--
--NOT AGAINST MY POWER RING!
YET YOUR POWER RING IS AS NOTHING AGAINST THE SHIELD FORMED BY MY ALMOST-INFINITE PSIONIC POWERS!
CCCP
WITH MERELY A THOUGHT, I CAN BYPASS THE SUBMARINE'S INTRICATE SECURITY SYSTEMS--


--AND SIMULTANEOUSLY *LAUNCH* ALL THE SHIP'S *NUCLEAR MISSILES* AT A SERIES OF PREDETERMINED *TARGETS* AROUND THE WORLD!
WITH LUCK, YOU JUST MIGHT BE ABLE TO CATCH SOME OF THEM BEFORE THEY DETONATE.
IT'S YOUR *CHOICE*, RINGSLINGER--THE MISSILES OR ME?
BUT YOU'D BETTER CHOOSE *QUICK!*
NO CHOICE AT ALL THEN REALLY, IS THERE?
STICK AROUND IF YOU'VE GOT THE NERVE!
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!
AND, AS THE MISSILES BREAK THE WATER'S SURFACE, ARCING IN A HALF-DOZEN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS...
I'VE GOT ONLY *SECONDS* BEFORE THESE MISSILES ARE TOO *WIDESPREAD* FOR ME TO STOP THEM ALL.

IF I EVER NEEDED EVERYTHING THE POWER RING CAN GIVE ME--
--IT'S NOW!
THERE ARE SIX MISSILES--
--ONLY SIX--
--AND ALL I HAVE TO DO IS CATCH THEM ALL--
--BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
"THAT'S ONE--
"--TWO--
"--THREE--
"--FOUR--
"--FIVE--
AND SIX...?
WHERE'S SIX?
"AH! GOT IT!"
THESE WARHEADS ARE STILL LIVE--!
LAST THING I WANT IS TO DO THE SHARK'S JOB FOR HIM!
GOT TO MAKE SURE THEY HAVE A SOFT LANDING--!!

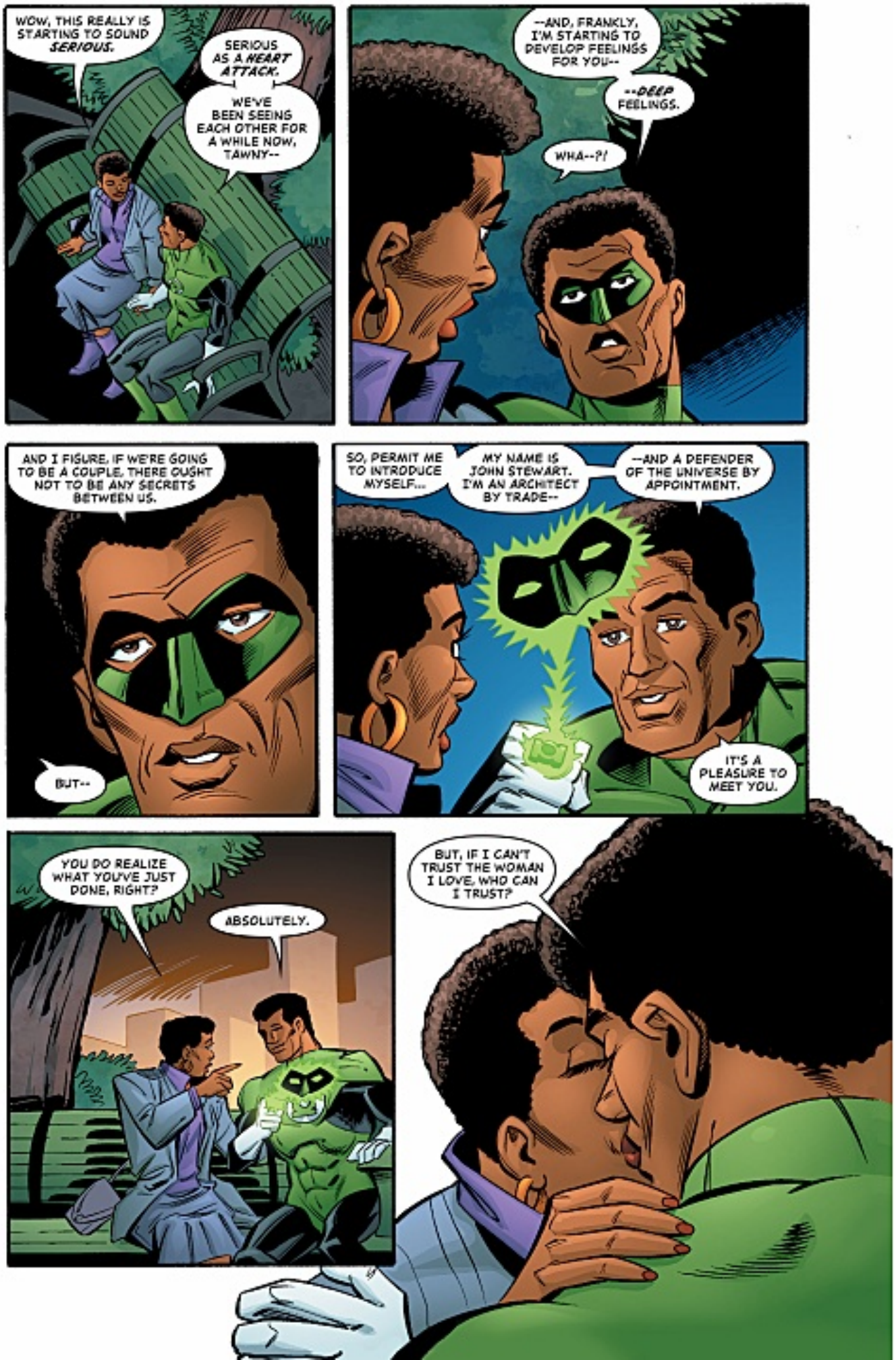
BETTER *DISARM* THESE THINGS WHILE I CAN--
--COLLECT THE WARHEADS IN A NEAT LITTLE BUNDLE--
*--THEN FIRE THEM INTO THE HEART OF THE SUN--
*--WHERE THEY CAN ALL DETONATE WITHOUT EVEN BEING NOTICED.
I'D PUMP THE MISSILES THEMSELVES OUT IN SPACE--
--BUT I THINK I MAY STILL HAVE A BETTER *USE* FOR THEM!

SO...AS WILY AS YOUR PREDECESSOR, I SEE.
BUT THIS STILL ISN'T OVER!
CCCP
ACTUALLY, FISHFACE-- IT IS!
ONCE I TRANSFORM THESE WORTHLESS MISSILES--
--INTO A SHARK CAGE EVEN YOU CAN'T ESCAPE FROM!
NO!
CHUNK!
CHUNK!
CHUNK!
FOOL, YOU'VE FORGOTTEN MY PSIONIC POWERS!
I'LL MIND-BLAST MY WAY OUT OF THIS, THEN--
--THEN--
WH-WHY IS IT GETTING SO HARD TO THINK--?!
...SO HARD...TO BREATHE...?
MIGHT BE BECAUSE I'M BUSY REMOVING ALL THE OXYGEN FROM THE WATER AROUND YOU--
--WHICH SHOULD KEEP YOU DOCILE WHILE I DELIVER YOU TO THE NEAREST AQUARIUM--
--AND DEVOLVE YOU INTO YOUR NATURAL FORM!
THEN I'VE GOT A LATE DATE TO KEEP!
CCCP


A HALF-HOUR LATER, AT ONE OF THE CITY'S FANCIEST FRENCH RESTAURANTS...
SORRY I'M LATE, TAWNY. A LITTLE UNEXPECTED... BUSINESS CAME UP.
COMES WITH THE TERRITORY, I GUESS, WHEN YOU'RE A SUPER-HERO.
SPEAKING OF WHICH...
...WHY IS IT NOBODY HERE IS EVEN REACTING TO THE PRESENCE OF A GREEN LANTERN IN THEIR MIDST?
JUST A LITTLE POWER RING TRICK.
IT MAKES PEOPLE PERCEIVE ME AS I WANT THEM TO PERCEIVE ME--
--AND RIGHT NOW EVERYBODY AROUND US SEES ME AS A KINDLY MIDDLE-AGED DOCTOR.
THIS WAY WE CAN ENJOY OUR DINNER WITHOUT BEING DISTURBED.
AND WHEN, AT LAST, THE EMERALD GLADIATOR AND THE ON-AIR TV STAR REPORTER HAVE FINISHED THEIR LEISURELY MEAL...
YOU'RE SURE YOU WOULDN'T CARE FOR DESSERT, MS. YOUNG?
THANKS, BUT I'VE GOT TO WATCH MY GIRLISH FIGURE.
YOU KNOW HOW THE CAMERA ADDS AT LEAST TEN POUNDS.
IN THAT CASE, WHAT SAY I HELP YOU ON WITH YOUR COAT AND WE TAKE A LITTLE WALK?
THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.
SOUNDS SERIOUS.
IT VERY WELL COULD BE.

SHORTLY, IN A WELL-KEMPT SECTION OF COAST CITY'S LARGEST PUBLIC PARK...
SO, YOU WANTED TO TELL ME SOMETHING...?
WHY DON'T WE SIT DOWN ON THAT BENCH OVER THERE?
COMFORTABLE? GOOD, THEN HOW ABOUT GETTING TO THE POINT...?
WELL, TAWNY, WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR A WHILE NOW AND--
WE GONNA HIP... WE GONNA HOP... WE GONNA TAKE IT TO THE TOP... AN' WE AIN'T NEVER GONNA STOP...
EXCUSE ME A SECOND. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
PARDON ME, SON, BUT WOULD YOU MIND TURNING DOWN THAT BOOMBOX A LITTLE BIT?
THE LADY AND I ARE TRYING TO HAVE A CONVERSATION.
HEY, THIS IS A PUBLIC PARK, OLD MAN. YUH WANNA TALK, TALK ELSEWHERE.
WE GONNA HIP... WE GONNA HOP...
LOOK, THERE'S NO REASON TO BE RUDE. I'M SIMPLY ASKING YOU TO TURN DOWN THE VOLUME.
STUFF IT, GRAMPS. I'M ENJOYIN' MY TUNES HERE.
YOU GOT A PROBLEM? --MOVE ON!
I'M TRULY SORRY YOU FEEL THAT WAY, SON--!
GONNA TAKE IT TO THE --FZZZT!
HUH--?!

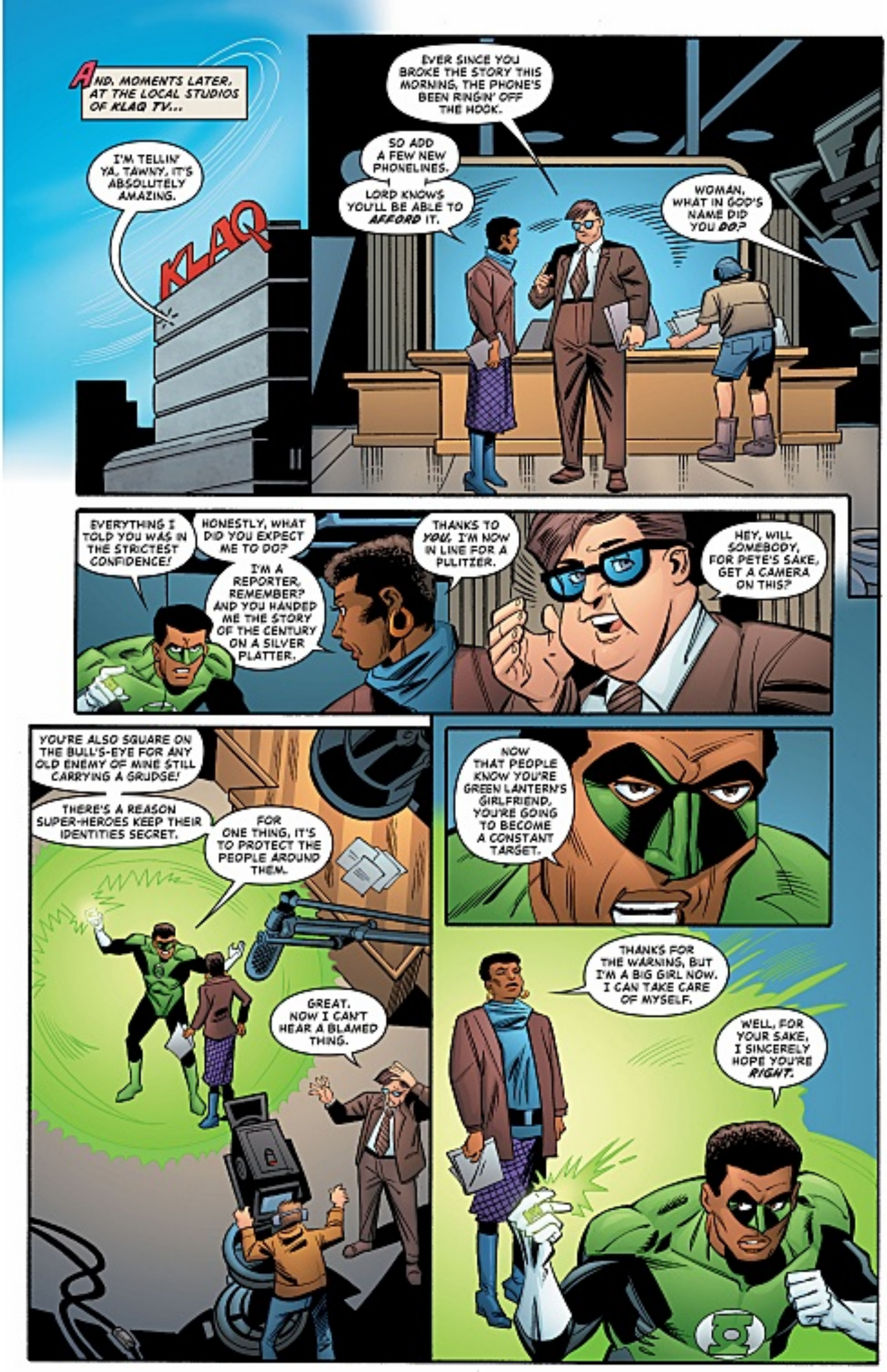
OKAY, NOW WHERE WERE WE...?
YOU WERE ABOUT TO TELL ME SOMETHING IMPORTANT.
HEY, WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS DAMN THING?
I KNOW IT CAN'T BE THE BATTERIES. I JUST PUT IN NEW ONES.
MAYBE SOME WIRE COME LOOSE IN THE BACK OR SOME--
BOOGA BOOGA!!
AAAAAAAAAH!
WELL, THAT'S BETTER. NOW WE CAN TALK UNINTERRUPTED.
YOU DO HAVE YOUR SUBTLE WAYS OF DEALING WITH PROBLEMS, DON'T YOU?
LET'S JUST SAY I DON'T BELIEVE IN OVERKILL.
NOW, AS I WAS ABOUT TO TELL YOU...


WOW, THIS REALLY IS STARTING TO SOUND *SERIOUS.*
SERIOUS AS A *HEART ATTACK.*
WE'VE BEEN SEEING EACH OTHER FOR A WHILE NOW, TAWNY--
--AND, FRANKLY, I'M STARTING TO DEVELOP FEELINGS FOR YOU--
--*DEEP* FEELINGS.
WHA--?!
AND I FIGURE, IF WE'RE GOING TO BE A COUPLE, THERE OUGHT NOT TO BE ANY SECRETS BETWEEN US.
BUT--
SO, PERMIT ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF...
MY NAME IS JOHN STEWART. I'M AN ARCHITECT BY TRADE--
--AND A DEFENDER OF THE UNIVERSE BY APPOINTMENT.
IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU.
YOU DO REALIZE WHAT YOU'VE JUST DONE, RIGHT?
ABSOLUTELY.
BUT, IF I CAN'T TRUST THE WOMAN I LOVE, WHO CAN I TRUST?

AN HOUR LATER, THE JUBILANT RINGSLINGER SEES TAWNY YOUNG TO HER DOOR, STOPS A DOUBLE CARJACKING HE HAPPENS TO PASS, AND HEADS HOME TO HIS APARTMENT FOR THE NIGHT...
TOMORROW, RUMOR HAS IT, IS GOING TO BE ANOTHER DAY...
FOR A CHANGE, JOHN GETS HIS FULL EIGHT HOURS OF SLEEP. NO LOCAL OR COSMIC CALAMITY OCCURS THAT REQUIRES A GREEN LANTERN'S IMMEDIATE ATTENTION--
--AND WHEN, AT LAST, HIS POWER BATTERY NUDGES HIM BACK TO CONSCIOUSNESS...
¡HUHN!
¡UNH!
OH, MAN, ALREADY?
I HAVE GOTTA START SETTING THE POWER BATTERY'S ALARM FOR A HALF-HOUR LATER.
GUESS I SLEPT SO WELL BECAUSE I FINALLY GOT THAT GIANT WEIGHT OFF MY SHOULDERS.
NOW THAT I'VE BEEN OPEN AND HONEST WITH TAWNY, IT'S THE BEGINNING OF A WHOLE NEW LIFE FOR--
KLIKT!
...AND, REPEATING THE NEWS STORY OF THE MORNING--PERHAPS THE DECADE--THE NEW AFRICAN AMERICAN GREEN LANTERN HAS BEEN UNMASKED AS LOCAL ARCHITECT JOHN STEWART...
SAY WHAT--?!

OH, YOU HAVE GOT TO BE *KIDDING* ME--!
THUS FAR, THERE HAS BEEN NO COMMENT FROM MISTER STEWART EITHER VERIFYING OR DENYING THE STORY. BUT WE WILL KEEP YOU UPDATED AS EVENTS UNFOLD...
IT'S NOT POSSIBLE--!
TAWNY COULDN'T HAVE DONE THIS...
...COULD SHE?
WHAT I TOLD HER WAS IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.
IT HAS TO BE SOME SORT OF MISTAKE OR--
OH, SWEET JEEZ..
LOOKS LIKE I'VE GOT EVERY BLAMED REPORTER WEST OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS CAMPED OUTSIDE MY DOOR.
WELL, I'M GONNA HAVE TO FACE THEM ALL *EVENTUALLY*--
--SO IT MIGHT AS WELL BE *NOW.*

THUS, MINUTES LATER...
MISTER STEWART? IS IT TRUE?
ARE YOU GREEN LANTERN?
DO YOU KNOW THE FLASH?
HOW TALL IS SUPERMAN?
C'MON, GIVE US A BREAK HERE.
I'M SORRY, BUT THERE'S BEEN A MAJOR MISUNDERSTANDING WHICH I HOPE TO HAVE CLEARED UP AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.
OTHER THAN THAT, I'M AFRAID I HAVE NO COMMENT AT THIS TIME.
WHAT ABOUT WONDER WOMAN? IS IT TRUE SHE COLORS HER HAIR?
LOOK, I'M TRYING TO BE POLITE HERE, BUT--
--BUT--
AH, SCREW IT!
OKAY, SO I AM GREEN LANTERN.
SO WHAT?
NEWS
AND THAT'S JUST ABOUT ALL THE INTERVIEW YOU'RE GONNA GET FROM ME!
WAIT! WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH BATMAN'S EARS?


AND, MOMENTS LATER, AT THE LOCAL STUDIOS OF KLAQ TV...
I'M TELLIN' YA, TAWNY, IT'S ABSOLUTELY AMAZING.
KLAQ
EVER SINCE YOU BROKE THE STORY THIS MORNING, THE PHONE'S BEEN RINGIN' OFF THE HOOK.
SO ADD A FEW NEW PHONELINES.
LORD KNOWS YOU'LL BE ABLE TO AFFORD IT.
WOMAN, WHAT IN GOD'S NAME DID YOU DO?
EVERYTHING I TOLD YOU WAS IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE!
HONESTLY, WHAT DID YOU EXPECT ME TO DO?
I'M A REPORTER, REMEMBER? AND YOU HANDED ME THE STORY OF THE CENTURY ON A SILVER PLATTER.
THANKS TO YOU, I'M NOW IN LINE FOR A PULITZER.
HEY, WILL SOMEBODY, FOR PETE'S SAKE, GET A CAMERA ON THIS?
YOU'RE ALSO SQUARE ON THE BULL'S-EYE FOR ANY OLD ENEMY OF MINE STILL CARRYING A GRUDGE!
THERE'S A REASON SUPER-HEROES KEEP THEIR IDENTITIES SECRET.
FOR ONE THING, IT'S TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE AROUND THEM.
GREAT. NOW I CAN'T HEAR A BLAMED THING.
NOW THAT PEOPLE KNOW YOU'RE GREEN LANTERN'S GIRLFRIEND, YOU'RE GOING TO BECOME A CONSTANT TARGET.
THANKS FOR THE WARNING, BUT I'M A BIG GIRL NOW. I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.
WELL, FOR YOUR SAKE, I SINCERELY HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT.

WHILE, IN A RUNDOWN ROOMING HOUSE IN ONE OF COAST CITY'S SEEDIEST SECTIONS...
...AND EARLY REPORTS HAVE THE NEW GREEN LANTERN ROMANTICALLY LINKED WITH KLAQ'S OWN ON-SCENE REPORTER, TAWNY YOUNG...
REALLY?
MODORA
ZEN PERHAPS ZIS IS THE SIGN I HAF SO LONG BEEN AWAITING.
IS ZAT SO?
I HAF KEPT MINE UNIFORM IN PRISTINE CONDITION, ANTICIPATING JUST SUCH A MOMENT.
--AND PERHAPS TODAY IS THE DAY SONAR FINALLY FULFILLS HIS SACRED PROMISE!
I ONCE SWORE TO MAKE MY TINY HOMELAND OF MODORA INTO A WORLDWIDE POWER, ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS NATIONS ON EARTH--
ZZZZZZip

SHORTLY, ACROSS TOWN...
THAT MALFUNCTIONING TRAFFIC LIGHT COULD'VE CAUSED A MAJOR MESS IF I HADN'T BEEN PASSING BY.
NICE TO SOLVE AN EASY ONE FOR A CHANGE.
...AND NOW HERE'S TAWNY YOUNG WITH THE EVENING NEWS...
NEW!
SHJHN! JUST CAN'T SEEM TO ESCAPE HER, CAN I?
GOOD EVENING, COAST CITY. HERE NOW THE NEWS.
OUR TOP STORY TONIGHT IS THE UNMASKING OF--
GUT EVENING. I HOPE YOU VILL FORGIF MINE INTERRUPTION.
MY NAME IS SONAR, HONORED HERO OF DER GREAT NATION OF MODORA--
SUNNHNS THAT SOUND--!
MY NEAD--!
SKREEEEEEEEEE
--AND I AM HERE TO CHALLENGE YOUR VASTLY-OVERRATED GREEN LANTERN TO A DUEL!

SONARP REALLY?
TALK ABOUT STARTING AT THE BOTTOM--!
I GIF YOU PRECISELY FIVE MINUTES TO FACE ME HERE OUTSIDE ZIS TELEVISION STATION--
--OR ZER VOMAN WHO IS ZER LOVE OF YOUR LIFE VILL SUFFER FOR YOUR COWARDICE.
TAWNY--?!
WELL, IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG, DID IT?
DER CLOCK IS TICKING, GREEN LANTERN!
COME FACE ME-- OR ADMIT TO THE VORLD ZAT SONAR IS YOUR MASTER!
DOES THAT DROPOUT FROM CLOWN COLLEGE REALLY THINK HE'S IN CHARGE OF THIS SITUATION?
IT WOULD SERVE TAWNY RIGHT IF I JUST IGNORED THE WHOLE THING AND WENT TO CATCH A MOVIE.
YEAH.
RIGHT.
LIKE THAT'S EVER GONNA HAPPEN.
KLAD

OF ALL THE PEOPLE I THOUGHT I MIGHT WIND UP FACING BECAUSE OF HER--SINESTRO--DOCTOR POLARIS--GOLDFACE...
SONAR WASN'T EVEN ON THE LIST.
ALL THAT MINI-MEGALOMANIAC REALLY CARES ABOUT IS PUTTING HIS PINT-SIZED MIDDLE EASTERN HOMELAND OF MODORA ON THE MAP SOMEHOW--
--AND SO FAR HE HASN'T DONE A VERY GOOD JOB OF IT!
HELLO, TAWNY. HAVING FUN?
OKAY, SO YOU WERE RIGHT AND I WAS WRONG.
JUST GET ME THE HELL DOWN FROM HERE, WILL YOU?
EASY, OKAY?
JUST HOLD STILL FOR A SECOND AND I'LL--
WHOK!
WHAT THE HELL JUST HIT ME?!
I CALL IT MY SUPERSONIC PUNCH, LANTERN--A CONCENTRATED BLAST OF SONIC RADIATION!
MY NEXT BLOW WILL SHATTER YOUR SPINE!
FIRST THING YOU HAVE TO DO IS PENETRATE MY POWER-RING GENERATED FORCEFIELD--
--AND THAT'S NOT GONNA HAPPEN!

FOOL! I AM DER MASTER OF NUCLEO-SONICS!
ALL I HAF TO DO IS KEEP CHANGING DER FREQUENCY OF DER SOUND-WAVES UNTIL THEY--
SO MUCH FOR YOUR NUCLEO-SONICS.
MY PARABOLIC REFLECTOR WILL RETURN WHAT YOU SEND AT ME DOUBLE!
AARRGGHH!!!
ENOUGH OF DER DIRECT ROUTE, THEN.
ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, I VILL BURY YOU!
THOOM
WE CAN PLAY THIS GAME ALL NIGHT, SONAR.
BUT, IN THE END, WHAT'S THE POINT?
REVENGE, RINGSLINGER!
REVENGE IS THE POINT!
UND IF I CANNOT HURT YOU--
--DEN I VILL SETTLE FOR SECOND-BEST!
NOOOO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING--?!

MY SONICS HAF CHANGED DER STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY OF DER METAL OF THE BROADCAST TOWER--
--RENDERING IT LIKE UNTO RUBBER--!
WHAT--?!
NOOOOOO!
TWANNG
KLAQ
H-HELP ME--!
WELL, YOU HAVE TO ADMIT I DID WARN YOU, DIDN'T I?
KLAQ
DON'T WORRY. YOU'RE IN SAFE HANDS!
NOW DO ME A HUGE FAVOR AND STAY PUT UNTIL I FINISH THIS!
ABSOLUTELY. WH-WHATEVER YOU SAY--!
GREAT.
SO NOW YOU FINALLY DECIDE TO LISTEN TO ME.
TYPICAL.
BUT I DIDN'T MEAN--!
OH, NEVER MIND.

NOW, WHERE WERE WE?
PREPARING FOR YOUR DEATH AT DER HANDS OF DER MASTER OF SOUND--!
YOU WANT TO HEAR SOMETHING, SPANKY?
THEN GIVE A LISTEN TO THIS!
EH?
AAAGGGGHHH!!
SKRE
EEEEE
SO LOUD--!
CAN'T FOCUS--!
CAN'T THINK--!
BUT I MUST--! I--
OH, JUST STUFF IT, WILL YA?
HUNNFF
WHOMP!

FIGHT'S OVER, SONAR.
THE BELL HAS RUNG--
--AND YOU ARE DOWN FOR THE COUNT!
AAAAAAAAAHH!
BONG!
BONG!
BONG!
ENOUGH! I YIELD!
TAKE MY TUNING-FORK GUN! TAKE MINE UNIFORM!
TAKE VHATEFER YOU VANT!
JUST STOP!!
WELL... IF YOU INSIST--!
OH, AND NEXT TIME YOU THINK OF ATTACKING SOMEBODY I MIGHT CARE ABOUT...?
I'D SERIOUSLY THINK AGAIN!
OY.

MOMENTS LATER...
...AND THIS IS TAWNY YOUNG WITH BREAKING NEWS...
...AS THE GREEN LANTERN HAS JUST SUCCEEDED IN CAPTURING THE NOTORIOUS SOUND-BANDIT KNOWN AS SONAR...
STILL, THE WORLD HAS HEARD ONCE MORE OF MY BELOVED MODORA.
LICE
BY THE WAY, YOU DO KNOW YOU'RE AN ABSOLUTE IDIOT, DON'T YOU?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WHAT IS IT YOU WANT MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE?
TO MAKE MY PRECIOUS HOMELAND OF MODORA AS FAMOUS AS YOUR PITIABLE UNITED STATES.
BUT YOU ALREADY KNOW THAT.
THEN WHY DON'T YOU JUST PUBLISH YOUR PATENTS, MORON, AND SHARE WHAT YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED WITH THE WORLD?
YOU COULD MAKE MODORA THE SONICS CAPITAL OF THE PLANET!
I--I NEVER THOUGHT--!
AND THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH YOUR KIND, SONAR...
...YOU RARELY DO.

POLICE
POLICE
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN GRAB A QUICK INTERVIEW WITH THE EMERALD GLADIATOR BEFORE HE FLIES OFF.
GREEN LANTERN, A MOMENT PLEASE..
WHAT DO YOU WANT NOW, TAWNY?
W-WELL, FIRST, I JUST WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR SAVING MY LIFE--!
COMES WITH THE JOB DESCRIPTION.
AND I JUST WANTED TO SAY--
NO, ACTUALLY, GIVE ME THAT MIKE FOR A MOMENT. THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO SAY.
BUT--
LOOK, YOU'VE HAD YOUR TURN. I THINK IT'S ONLY FAIR THAT I HAVE MINE.
TO ANY OF MY ENEMIES OUT THERE WHO MAY BE WATCHING THIS RIGHT NOW. LET'S GET A FEW THINGS STRAIGHT.
FIRST, MS. YOUNG HERE NO LONGER MEANS ANYTHING TO ME. SO ATTEMPTING TO USE HER AS BAIT IN THE FUTURE IS A WASTE OF YOUR TIME.
AS MS. YOUNG REVEALED EARLIER TODAY, MY NAME IS JOHN STEWART. I'M AN ARCHITECT FOR FERRIS AIRCRAFT.
AND, IF YOU WANT ME, COME GET ME. BUT LEAVE THE PEOPLE AROUND ME ALONE!
I PROMISE YOU, IGNORE THIS--YOU WILL NOT BE HAPPY WITH THE RESULT.
HAVE A GOOD DAY.

AND WHILE WE'RE AT IT, YOU MIGHT AS WELL HAVE THIS AS WELL.
I'M CLEARLY NOT GOING TO NEED IT ANYMORE.
HERE. YOU CAN HANG IT ON YOUR PULITZER.
JOHN, I--I CAN'T BEGIN TO TELL YOU HOW SORRY I AM--!
SPARE ME THE PLATITUDES.
I TRUSTED YOU AND YOU BETRAYED ME.
BUT I NEVER REALIZED--!
FORGET IT. WHAT'S DONE IS DONE.
BUT FROM HERE ON, SISTER, YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN!
MOST DEFINITELY
THE END

Cover for **SWAMP THING WINTER SPECIAL #1** (2018)
Art by Jason Fabok

SWAMP THING

WINTER SPECIAL

EDITOR'S NOTE

Len had a piano in his house that he couldn't play. It was tucked away in a room full of books and photos and art, including an original piece by fellow, late Swamp Thing co-creator Bernie Wrightson. The piano was there so that when someone who did *know how to play came over, Len could listen. He loved music, despite not being able to play a note or carry a tune. I will always remember him sitting in the corner of the tucked-away room, singing out of tune and smiling as a guest played until the wee hours of the night, the party going on all around him. He didn't notice. He just wanted to listen to someone who could* **really play.**

Working on **SWAMP THING** *with Len, I felt as if I had swapped places with him. I was sitting in the corner of the tucked-away room, singing wildly out of tune, just happy to be listening to him play. Because no one could play like Len could when it came to writing comics. Stories spilled out of him—vivid moments of character, jokes that still make me laugh to think about, life breathed into old friendships, the crippling anguish of villains. And that was only the baseline to his unsurpassable talent as a wordsmith—his characters' voices, his lush narration.* **No one** *wrote Swamp Thing like Len.*

Which is why we present this final story to you without text. Len passed away before he was able to complete a lettering script for the issue, meant to be both the first of a new series and a continuation of his miniseries **SWAMP THING: THE DEAD DON'T SLEEP**, *a title that seems ever more poignant now. Since no one could write like Len could, we felt it best not to try, and instead to let the story speak for itself. You will find the plot in its entirety printed after the artwork, drawn stunningly by Kelley Jones and colored by*

Michelle Madsen. Hopefully, it will give you a glimpse into the incredible gifts Len gave to the world of comics.

As much as it is always bittersweet for things to be left unfinished, I find myself truly happy that Len's final story is shared just as it is. He loved to create, yes, but he also loved people. *People who* shared *his love of creation. This last story, left as it is, feels to me in some way like the piano—an instrument he'll never be able to play again, but that he's left for us. A reminder that all the characters and stories he gave us, they were meant to be used, continued, shared by people who love them. By people who will use them to make more music.*

And I'm sure, somewhere tucked away, he's listening, smiling and singing along.

Rebecca Taylor
EDITOR, DC COMICS
DECEMBER 2017

LEN WEIN
STORY

KELLEY JONES
PENCILS AND INKS

MICHELLE MADSEN
COLORS

REBECCA TAYLOR
EDITOR

SWAMP THING *CREATED BY*

LEN WEIN *AND*

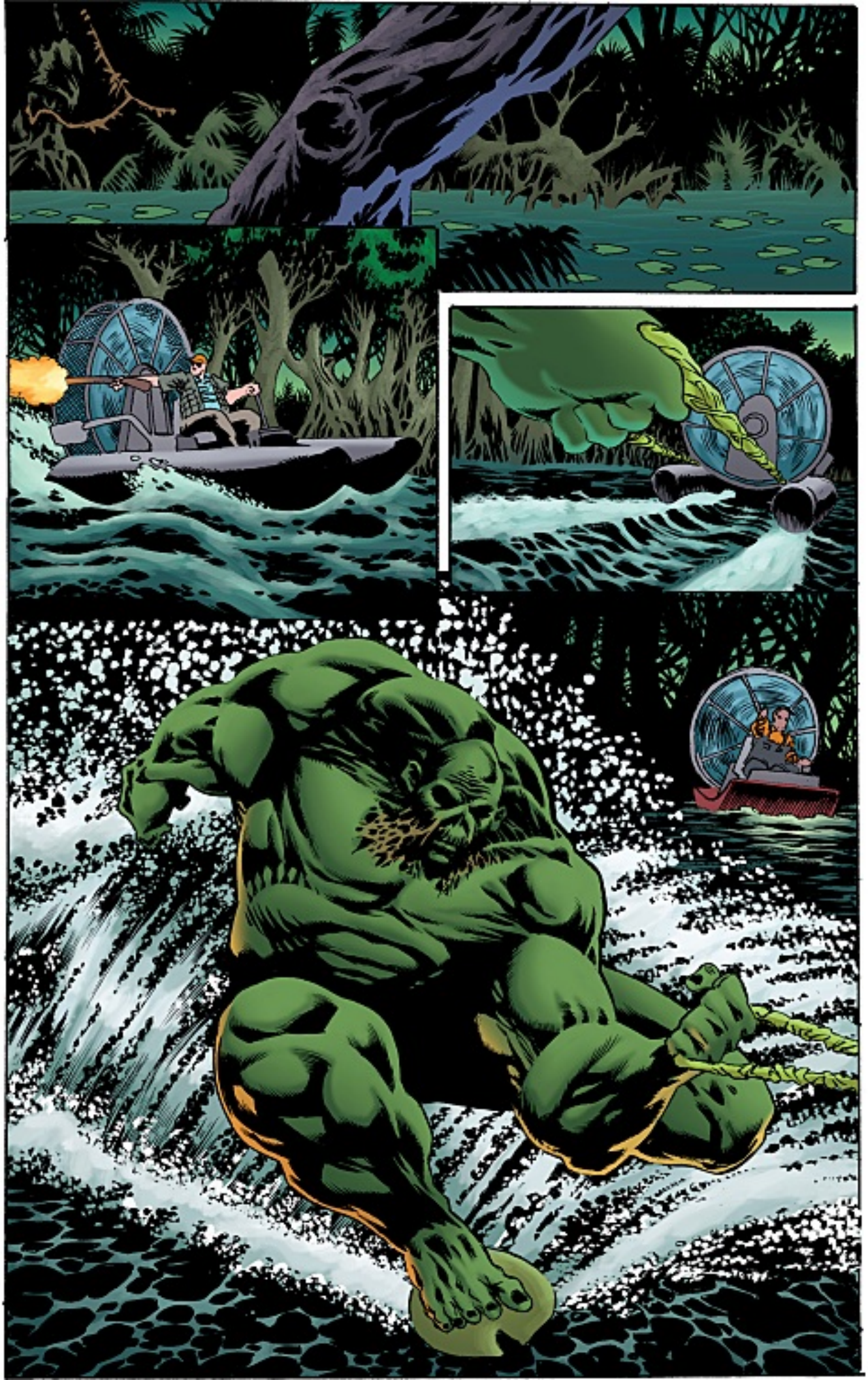
BERNIE WRIGHTSON

GOLD MANOR

EMERGENCY
ENTRANCE

WANTED
WANTED
SWAMPTHING
WANTE
MICHAEL CARTE
WANTED
BRYCE SAMUE
WANTED
SQUAD
ROOM

CITY OF
NEW BRUNSWICK



SWAMP THING #7 - "Spring Awakening!" - 20pps.

(KELLEY: Well, here we go again. The first of what I hope will be a long-running series that will make us both rich and famous. You know how I work by now, using that slash page and panel format. If you have any ideas, comments, my number's at the top of the page. Thrilled to be working together yet again. Onward...)

PG.1-We OPEN with a FULL-PAGE ESTABLISHING SHOT of the swamp at sunset. Banyans, birds, frogs, snakes, water, muck, all the usual. On the right side of the panel stands the SWAMP THING, arms clasped behind his back, watching the kind of sunset that only Michelle Madsen can color. Leave me room for the usual LOGO, TITLE, and CREDITS.

PG.2-The sun completely down now, Swampy turns toward us and starts to walk away as a beautiful red **SWAMP BIRD** flitters all around him. / Down angle, close on Swampy, as he looks up at the bird and holds up his right index finger as a perch for the bird to land on. / The roots and such that compose the Swamp Thing's finger instantly extend several inches as the bird lands on it. / Suddenly, before Swampy can react, the bird rips a nice, long twig right out of Swampy's finger and flies off.

PG.3-Startled, a pissed-off Swampy shakes his fist angrily at the bird, as it flies off with his twig in its beak. / The thick foliage seems to part of its own accord to allow the rampaging Swamp Thing to follow the bird-- / --Then Swampy stops suddenly as he sees something up off-panel. / Close on Swampy as he smiles a wide smile. / Reverse angle, as we see the bird gently fitting the stolen twig into a poor makeshift nest that has three chirping chicks in it. / Our angle widens, to include Swampy, as he gestures-- / --And the nest suddenly fills in, becoming a lot more like a castle than a tangled mess. / Happy with the world in general, Swampy wanders off into the darkness, as the devoted bird feeds its chicks.

PG.4-CUT TO: a nice establishing shot of **GOTHAM CITY** under a cold full moon. Leave me room for a couple of captions. / Push in to an establishing shot of a very expensive townhouse with the words **GOLD MANOR** embossed above the doorway. Again, leave room for captions. / Pushing into the drawing room, we see the double French doors wide open onto the balcony, the fancy silk curtains blowing out into the night. On the floor, face down, lies a man in a classy butler uniform. "Egbert? says an off-panel voice. "Egbert, where are you?" / New angle, as **CEDRICK GOLD**, owner of the home, enters the room, startled to see the body on the floor. Gold is tall, slightly overweight, with a thin moustache like you see in all those '40s movies. He wears an embroidered smoking jacket. He looks down at the butler's dead body in shock. / For a moment, Gold kneels by the body, checking for life signs. / Then his head swings to look off-panel as he realizes, "Cecilia." / Gold races for the nearby bedroom door like his life depends on it, shouting the little girl's name. / Close on Gold, as he stops at the bedroom doorway, absolute terror on his face. As he whispers, "No. Not you."

PG.5-This is a FULL PAGER. Standing beside a fancy bassinet, his huge body still half-turned to the bassinet, his upper body facing us, a swaddled infant girl, **CECILIA**, held easily in the palm of one hand, stands **SOLOMON GRUNDY**, wearing his classic black suit, gray shirt, the whole nine yards. The moon behind him lights Grundy as the clouds part to reveal the full moon. You know exactly the shot I'm looking for. Go for it.

PG.6-Fists balled in parental fury, Gold shouts at Grundy, "Take your rotten hands off my newborn daughter, you monster!" / Middle shot, as Grundy glances at the giggling infant in his hand. "Yesssss...," growls Grundy, "Born on a Monday." / "Put her down," shouts Gold, as he hurls himself at Grundy-- / --Who casually swats Gold aside with his free arm, so hard it sends Gold halfway through the wall. / As the unconscious Gold topples forward to the floor, Grundy places the baby protectively in the crook of

his arm, he warns Gold to leave him alone-- / --Or there will be consequences, Grundy finishes, as he leaps easily over the balcony railing with the baby, to be lost in the darkness.

PG.7-CUT TO: a nice establishing shot of the HOSPITAL where we left Matt Cable at the end of the miniseries, leaving me room for a caption or two. / Pushing inside a corridor, we find the same two **NURSES** from last issue happily discussing the amazing progress Matt has been making and how he's going to be released tomorrow. / In Matt's room, we find him sitting on the edge of the bed, mostly dressed, buttoning his shirt cuffs. Behind him, on the windowsill, stand a half-dozen potted plants, obviously get-well gifts, all dead. / Suddenly, the largest of the dead plants starts to tremble and shake-- / --And out of the plant writhes and twists a tangle of foliage-- / --That quickly coalesces into Swampy. "Been expecting you," says Cable. "Well, you know how it is in the Avatar business," says Swampy, "never a dull moment."

PG.8-"So, how are you feeling?" asks Swampy. Favoring Cable, as he replies, "About as good as I could feel. Just wish I could remember what happened during those months I was unconscious." / Favoring Swampy as he replies, "You going back to Washington?" / On Cable as he says, "No, there's nothing left for me there. I'm thinking of sticking around here instead." / Favoring Matt, as he continues, "I've been here in Houma so long, it's started to feel like home." / Close on Matt as he adds, "I've been thinking of opening a small private investigations agency here. Houma doesn't already have one." / Close on Swampy, looking at Matt through the crude magnifying glass he has formed from circling his index finger. "Matt Cable, Private Eye," says Swampy, "I like that."

PG.9-Suddenly, the doorknob rattles. "Damn," says Matt, "Must be the nurses." "I'd better get out of here," says Swampy, undulating toward the dead window plants-- / --And diving into the biggest plant, disappearing from sight, leaving the plant in extravagant bloom. / The smiling nurses tell Matt they're here to arrange

his final discharge. / Now the fat nurse notices the blossoming plant. "Wow," she says, "I thought for sure this one was dead."/ Favoring a wry smile on Matt's face, as he replies, "What can I say? I've got a good friend with a real green thumb."

PG.10-CUT TO: a nice establishing shot of the sole **POLICE STATION** in Houma, as designed by you. It is dark out and the place is illuminated from the inside out. / Pushing inside, we find **SHERIFF DARCY FOX** using the butt of her pistol to tack a wanted poster of the Swamp Thing to the bulletin board. "You don't really believe that's going to work, do you?" says **DEPUTY ARLO.** /Angle widens to include Arlo, who is watching her. "Nice idea in theory, Sheriff, but how are ya plannin' on holding him? I mean, he can ooze between the bars, become a bouquet of posies and float right out the window..." / Favoring Darcy as she replies, "Rumor has it he's a creature of honor. We catch him, we'll just have to hold him to his--" "Excuse me," says an off-panel voice. / Both turn to find **MATT CABLE** in the doorway, fedora hat pulled back on his head, collar and tie hanging loosely around his neck, a thick satchel at his feet. "Hey, you're Cable, right? The guy that creature Arcane took possession of last month?" "Yeah, didn't take," says Cable as he rubs the back of his neck.

PG.11-"Well, we appreciate your dropping by to say good-bye," says Darcy, "Hope you have a good life." "No, you've got me all wrong; I came to say I'll be staying," smiles Matt. / "But why?" stammers Darcy. "Truth to tell, this town has kind of grown on me. Besides, my only true friend lives near here."/ "But what'll you do for a living?" asks Arlo. / Cable pushes back the brim of his hat as he smiles, "I've been thinking of opening a small private investigator's office. Figure there's more than enough madness in this town to keep me more than busy."/ Picking up his suitcase, Cable turns to leave. "See you both around," he says. "Swell," says Arlo, rubbing his hand through his hair, "The last possible thing Houma needed was him."

PG.12-CUT TO: a small re-establishing shot of the front of Gold Manor in the pouring rain, with bands of yellow POLICE DO NOT CROSS tape all over the place. There are **TWO COPS** in heavy rain-gear flanking the front door. / Now the door opens and **COMMISSIONER GORDON** steps out, pulling his rain collar close about his neck. "You guys get a good look in there?" he asks. "No, sir," replies one of the cops. "Good," says Gordon, "Look, I'm gonna get me a smoke."/ As the soggy Gordon disappears around the corner Cop A says, "Thought he gave up smoking." Cop B replies, "What can I say, old habits." / In the alley in the foreground, Gordon struggles to light his pipe in the pouring rain. "Anything?" says a dark off-panel voice from the shadows. "Not a sign," says Gordon, "Looks like a scene from a Wes Craven film in there." / "Surely there must have been something unusual in there?" says the dark voice. "Unusual?" says Gordon, puffing on his pipe. "Well, there were clumps of dirt all over the place?" / "Clay? Then it had to be Clayface," says the dark figure. "No, I said dirt," says Gordon, "Dirt, dry, grainy, like from the grave." / "I've got to look into this," says the shadowy figure as he suddenly streaks up into the sky and vanishes, saying, "Try to keep dry, okay?" And Gordon chuckles in reply.

PG.12-CUT TO: a thin, narrow path along a mountainside, following one of those old-fashioned wooden freight trains called the City of New Brunswick as it clatters along the rails. It's late afternoon. / Inside an old wooden boxcar, an **OLD HOBO** helps pull his struggling buddy into the car. / In the middle of the car, there appears to be a huge pile of old rags. There is nothing else in the car. / Noticing the pile of rags, the hobo reaches for it, saying, "Well, at least we'll be warm tonight." / As the hobo touches the pile of rags, it suddenly rises and swirls-- / --Ultimately transforming into an angry Solomon Grundy, still gently cradling the baby in the crook of his arm. / "You threatened Grundy, tried to hurt little girl," says Grundy, his free hand reached out to the terrified hobo, who begs for his life.

PG.13-CUT TO: outside the boxcar as the poor bum comes exploding out though the wooden wall, leaving a hobo-shaped hole in the wood. / Wider so we can see Grundy toss the other hobo out into the darkness, where his horrified scream fades into the darkness far below. / Sitting on the boxcar floor once more, gently playing with the baby. Like any baby, she squeezes Grundy's fingertip with all her might. / To both Grundy and the baby's surprise, the squeezed section is reduced to dust. / As Grundy and the baby watch in delight, Grundy's fingertip grows back as if nothing had really happened. / And the old freight train rolls on.

PG.14-CUT TO: wide, narrow re-establishing shot of the deep swamp waters, leaving me room for captions. / An odd shot from just above water level, as one of those cool old fan boats, y'know, the type of skiff propelled by one of those giant fans at the back, races through the water. All we can see of the PILOT in this shot is one hand maneuvering the throttle while his other hand fires an old shotgun behind him at whatever pursues him. / Same angle of shot, but this time we're looking at Swamp Thing's feet, each straddling an oversize lily pad, moving as if he's surfing on the pads, being propelled by something we cannot yet see. / Bigger panel so that we can clearly now see what's happening. Pursuing the old fan skiff is Swamp Thing, using the lily pads like one might use a pair of water skis, connected to the skiff by a tangle of vines. Behind Swampy, an almost identical fan skiff, its pilot another local YOKEL, is firing his shotgun at Swampy. "Ah tol' ya we shouldn't do no poaching in these parts," says the rear yokel. "What's done's done," says the first yokel, "Now all we gotta do is find a way to stop it."

PG.15-On the second yokel as he shouts to his partner, "You just do wha' ah yol' t' do, and we'll be fine. Ready? NOW!" / Close as the front yokel immediately throws the throttle into full reverse. / Instantly, the fan boat roars into reverse, heading directly at Swampy, who is unable to slow. / As a natural reaction, Swampy throws his

hands up across his face to protect himself-- / --Just as, in a nice, full shot, the fan plows into and through Swampy, reducing him to so much shredded cabbage. It is not a pleasant scene.

PG.16-The yokels pump their fists as shredded cabbage pours down around them. / Suddenly, in a triptych of as many panels as it takes, the raining cabbage begins to pile up, slowly taking on humanoid form-- / --Until he stands once more in the middle of the muck as the Swamp Thing. And boy, is he not happy. / Close mid-shot of the first yokel, still holding his shotgun, as he looks at the grim Swamp Thing. "In God's good name," he stammers, "Wh-what are you?" / Tight close-up on Swampy, looking directly at us, as grim as he can be. "Angry," he answers, "Very, very angry."

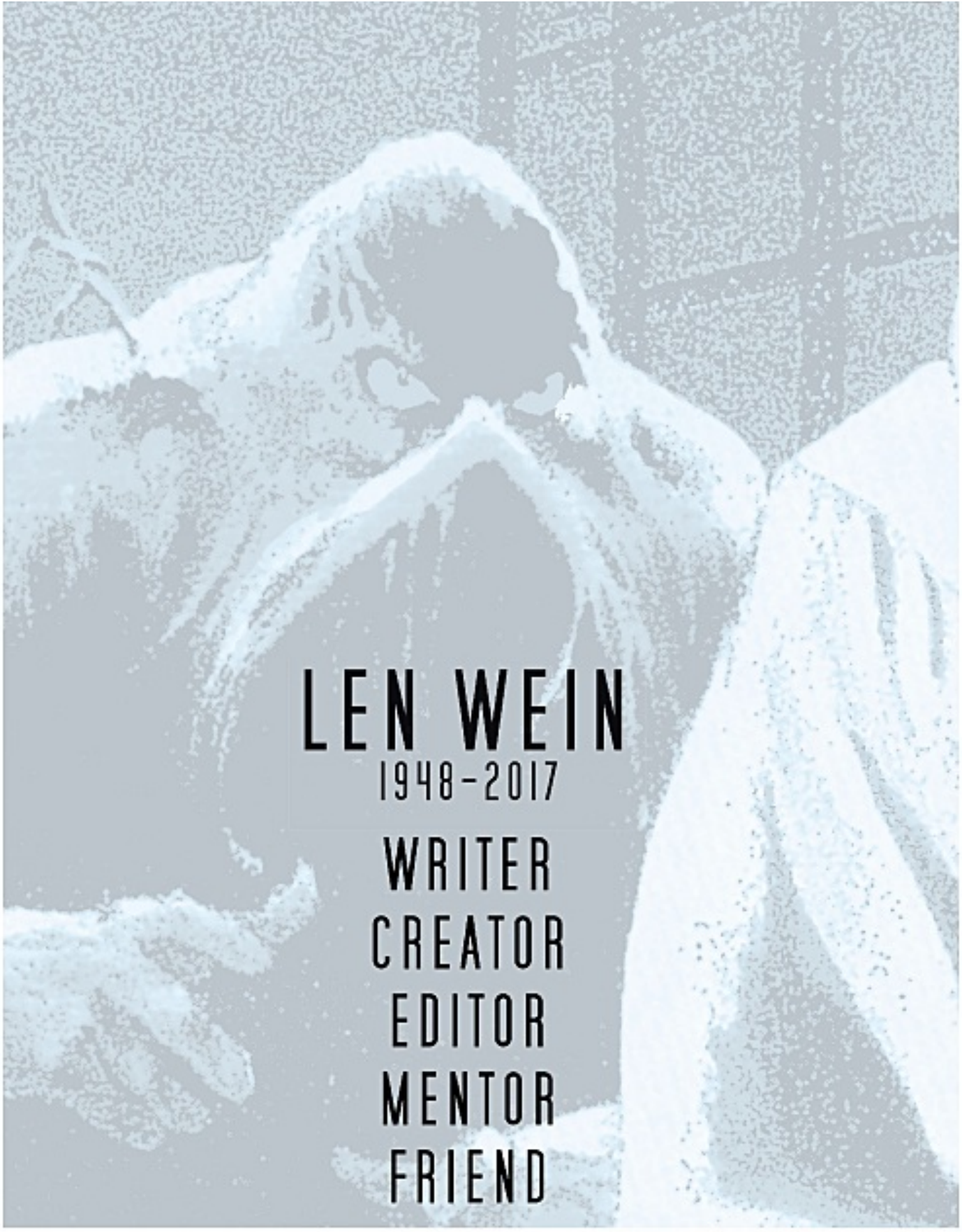
PG.17-The yokel lifts his shotgun, preparing to fire at Swampy-- / --When suddenly, a pair of BATARANGS whip out of the darkness, each with a long line of super-strong fishing line attached. / Before the yokels can react, the lines wrap around and around them, binding them from shoulder to waist. / Meanwhile, the other ends of the fishing lines, also tipped with Batarangs, snap upward, binding themselves around a thick banyan branch overhead. / Now two more Batarangs flash out of the darkness, smacking into the two boats' throttles, setting them in motion in opposite directions.

PG.18- As the fan boats move far enough away, the two yokels are violently yanked up and out of their boats-- / -- And slam together under the banyan, knocking them both out. / Their unattended fan boats, however, start to turn back toward one another, picking up speed as they go. / Swampy, realizing what's about to happen, turns away, flinching.

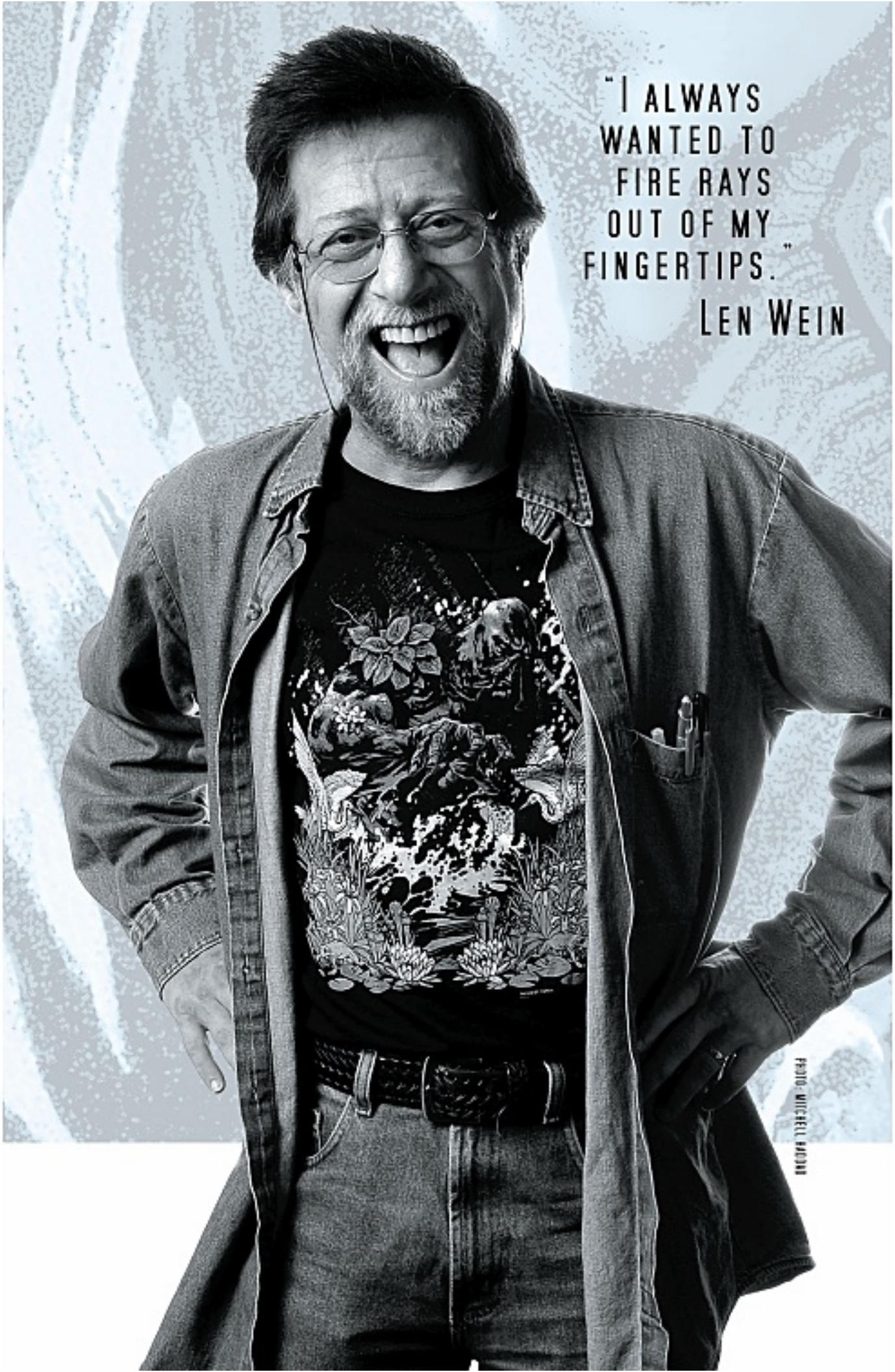
PG.19-Completely out of control, the two fan boats collide head-on at top speed-- / --Resulting in a huge explosion that sends splinters of the boats flying everywhere. This should be an impressive, good-sized panel. / As fragments of the two boats rain down

around him, Swampy glares into the darkness and says, "Showoff." / A voice from the shadows replies, "At least they're both still alive," says the voice, "That should make your local sheriff happy." "Haven't met her yet, have you?" replies Swampy. / "So what brings you all the way out here, away from your usual bailiwick?" Swampy asks the shadows. "What else?" replies the shadowy figure.

PG.20-This is a FULL-PAGE SHOT, designed to blow your socks off, as the clouds part and we see **THE BATMAN** crouched in the branches of a gnarled old banyan tree, cape billowing all about him, eyes glaring like embers of coal, you know the look. Still mid-waist deep in water, even Swamp Thing is impressed. Leave me room for a NEXT ISSUE blurb, and we're off and running. See you in a month.



Over the course of his long and prolific career, comics legend Len Wein did everything possible in the medium, including co-creating the popular characters Swamp Thing, Wolverine, Nightcrawler, Storm, Colossus and the Human Target. He also served as a senior editor at DC Comics and as editor-in-chief at both Marvel and Disney Comics. Having written stories for just about every major character in the comic book world, Wein went on to write for television, film and animation, including such hit series as *X-Men*, *Spider-Man* and *Batman: The Animated Series*.


"I ALWAYS WANTED TO FIRE RAYS OUT OF MY FINGERTIPS."
LEN WEIN
PHOTO: MITCHELL BROWN

This tribute portrait was commissioned by DC publisher Dan DiDio, in conjunction with Marvel Comics, to honor Len and all his creations across all comics. Pencilled by José Luis García-López, inked by Joe Prado and colored by Mark Chiarello, the piece ran in DC's KAMANDI CHALLENGE #12, which was meant to be one of Len's last stories for DC before his passing. The original artwork was gifted to Len's beloved wife, Christine.

EXPLORE THE DC UNIVERSE WITH ONE OF COMICS' GREATEST TALENTS!

Although he is best known as the co-creator (with artist Bernie Wrightson) of DC's legendary Swamp Thing, writer and editor Len Wein also made his mark on many other corners of the DC Universe over the course of his celebrated career.

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SON OF ULTRON